

THE 4108 2231

1-5

Axe at the Root

OF

PROFESSORS MISCARRIAGES.

IN

*A Plain Detection of, and a Wholsome
Caveat against the Miscarriages
opposite to Faith in God.*

By *Thomas Malt*, Minister of the Gospel.

Mat. 3. 10.

*Now also is the Axe laid unto the Root of the Trees; therefore,
every Tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down,
and cast into the fire.*

John 5. 14.

Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Iſa. 7. 9.

If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *John Weeks*, Bookseller in *Tiverton*, 1668.

Sold for 6d. by the Author's Appointment.

18 ~~St. John~~ ~~London~~ 13'

Given me by my worthy friend
the authour mar: 1668

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4108 de 31

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THE AXE at the Root

ERRATA.

Candid Reader

IN the two first sheets of this Treatise, the Author hath not found any faults; but in the Marginal Quotations; and he trusts thou wilt find none in the rest, but what thine ingenuity will correct or pardon. In those sheets thou maist; p. 3. for *sinatis* r. *sinaris*. And f. *Inarus* r. *Gnarus*. p. 6. for *swidas* r. *suidas*. And for *justus* r. *gustus*. Vale.



To the *Cordial Mourners* in England, especially in *Exon, Crediton, Tiwerton, Taunton, Barnstable, Bithford, Torrington, Dartmouth,* and *Fowey*, for the dreadful *Tokens* of God's displeasure against the *Land* of their *Nativity*, and the *sad Causes* thereof; The Author wisheth *Grace and Peace.*

Dear Hearts,

I Doubt not of your kind acceptance, and Christian improvement of this honest *Essay*, to lay the *Axe* of God's Word at the *Root* of the *Provocations* of God's *Sons* and *Dan-gh-ters*. Are not you sensible of the woful (though but partial) departures of your God from your own Souls, and from the *Land* of your *Nativity*? Are not you lamenting after the *Ak*? 1 Sam. 7. 2. Are not you afraid that God is breaking *England's* staff of *Zach. 11. 10,* *Bands*, by breaking its staff of *Beauty*? that even *death* will 14. follow offending in *Baal*? Yea, do not your hearts tremble at the very thoughts of what will farther ensue God's taking away the *Chariots* and *Horsemen* of your *Israel*? And would not you take the direct course to re-enjoy the *smiles* of your dearest *Husband*, and to prevent *England's* cutting down? Yea, are not you convinced that the *Provocations* of God's *Sons* and *Dan-gh-ters* go nearest to his heart? and that there is no hope even of their *Salvation*, so long as *vain thoughts* of escaping utter ruine, without true repentance do lodge within them? And are not you therefore resolved, that seeing God hath laid the *Axe* to the *root* of the *Trees*, you will now in good earnest lay the *Axe* to the *root* of your own *Sins*? that you will make it your main business to promote in your own Souls, yea and in others too, not only more *humiliation* for, but more *reformation* of what hath been amiss, as knowing that *humiliation* without *reformation*, is like the *word* of God in the *Letter*, which *kills*, and not *quickens*; it accents sin, and not lesseneth it; it continues judgment, and not removes it? For your help therefore herein, I have endeavoured to detect and caution you against the *miscarriages* opposite to *Faith* in God; which I dare say, are the *Root* of all your other *Miscarriages*: By the *sword* of the *Spirit*, and that as wielded by the skilful hands of several of *England's* *Worthies*, to whom you are refer'd in the Margin; I have fought neither with *small* nor *great*, Ephes. 6. 2 Chr. 18. 3

Phal. 110. 5.

great, but with your *King-sins* : It is said of Christ, *In the day of thy wrath thou shalt smite through Kings*. And is not this the day of Christ's, yea, of your wrath against your *sins* ? Is not Christ, yea, are not *you* angry with them, and troubled for them ? O then ! shew that you have the *Spirit of Christ* in you ; *smite through Kings*, I mean only your *Kingly-sins* ; and then I am sure none will be able to stand before you : *Scuh* you will find your sins opposite to *Faith* to be ; each of them hath many followers, and therefore may be called *Gad*, *Behold a Troop comes*. I have indeed purposely waved speaking of the *Miscarriages* opposite to *Faith*, with reference to its immediate object, *Jesum Christ* ; not only because those are more taken notice of by convinced Souls in these days, than these with reference to its ultimate object, the *Deity through Christ* : But because those are most excellently handled by the Reverend Author of the late choice *Gospel-Glass*, Ch. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, to which I shall once more refer you ; and shall detain you no longer from making use of this *Axx*. But whilst I am whispering a word or two in the ears of such, as from the *Miscarriages* of some (and not all) Professors, in which they are not countenanced, but for which they are condemned by Religion and Profession, are so unreasonable as to *fall foul* upon Religion and Profession. It is true hereby offences do come, and *wo be to him by whom offences come*. *Whoever shall offend*, i. e. lay a stumbling-block before one of Christ's little ones, it had been better a millstone were hung about his neck, and he thrown into the Sea. *Wo be to such Professors*, that by their being *spots*, open the mouth of *Blasphemy*. But *wo be* also unto all those that take offence against Religion and Profession, thereby. *Wo unto the World* because of offences. Such will be found at last to be *Blasphemers against God*, and runners in the broad way to *Atheism* and *Damnation*. Christ is a *stone of stumbling*, and a *rock of offence*, only to those that perish ; to them that believe, he is precious. This is hinted that none may be offended, By your *Faith's* helper,
T. M.

Dec. 23. 1667.

Mat. 18. 7.

Mat. 18. 7.

1 Pet. 2. 7.

Joh. 16. 1.

* O that such would seriously read judicious Mr. A. Burgess's 11 Sermon in his most excellent Commentary on Job. 17. I shall only tran-

scribe for them one passage, fol. 377. Would it not have been (saith he) horrible impiety, to have broken out against all the Apostles ; and Christ himself ; saying, Look what manner it is as the Pharisees said, a company of impostors and deceivers, they are their own ends ; they are all covetous, and though they pretend Religion, yet they are covetous ; and though they condemn the gross sins of the World, yet in secret they do as any ? would not such a tongue shew that it was fit on fire of Hell, that should utter such things ?

OF THE *Tho: Johnson*
MISCARRIAGES

Opposite to

Faith in God,

For which Souls ought to be humbled, and
of which they ought to take heed.

By *Thomas Mall.*

John 16. 7, 8, 9.

*I will send the Comforter unto you, and when he is come,
he will convince the World of sin, &c. because they be-
lieve not on me.*

*Isa. 7. 9. --- If ye will not believe, surely you shall not be
established.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *John Weeks* Bookseller, at *Tiverton*, and are
there to be sold at his Shop, and by his Assigns, and
by no others in all the West Countrey, 1668.

The Epistle to the Reader.

THe publishing of these Papers obligeth me briefly to answer four Questions.

Quest. 1. What is the design of this Treatise?

Ans. It is yet farther to make the Voice of Gods Rod articulate, that (as one saith) in the print of its lashes, not only Gods Wrath, but the sin he scourgeth us for, and the duty he would drive us to, might be found in legible Characters, that even he that runs may read them: and therefore the design is to make you better, and thereby wiser for your selves, and the Land of your Nativity.

Quest. 2. Why are the miscarriages about Faith onely insisted on?

Ans. Because no miscarriages have more incensed God against us. And for others, I shall refer you to the late excellent Gospel-Glass, representing the miscarriage of English-Professors in their personal and relative Capacities, for which God is contending with them. Printed, 1667.

Quest. 3. Why are these miscarriages, not only detested, and reprehended, but cautioned against?

Ans. Because (as it is not enough for you to reform, unless your hearts be broken for, and from, your transgressions: so) it is not enough for you to be troubled for your former iniquities, unless you watch against them for the future. And therefore also I would advise you to turn each question in the above mentioned Book into a Caveat: the evidences of guilt into particulars whereof you should beware: and the considerations to promote your mourning for, into motives to you to reform, what hath been amiss.

Sin no more,
lest a worse
thing come
unto thee, &c.
5. 14.

Quest. 4. Why are there here so many collections out of the Expositions, Treatises, and Sermons of our English Divines?

Ans. To stir up some to follow the advice of Sr. Francis Bacon in so collecting a Body of Divinity. But if the counsel of so great a Scholar be not a sufficient Apology for me, I am satisfied that herein I have not served Christ and your souls with that which cost me nothing, but have done as I was able to approve my self

Your Faiths Servant, T. M.

The Miscarriages opposite to the several A&S of Faith in God, both

Inward	Dire&, the A&S	Apprehending in the	Excess, Curiosity.	Page 1.
			Ignorance.	p. 3.
	Defect		Error.	p. 4.
			Unteachableness.	p. 5.
			A form of Knowledge.	p. 6.
			Not growing in Knowledge.	p. 7.
			Not making use of Knowledge.	p. 9.
	Assenting, in the		Excess, Credulity.	p. 10.
			Incredulity.	p. 11.
		Defect	Unsettledness.	p. 13.
			A dead Faith.	p. 15.
	Consenting	Refusing God.		p. 18.
		Closing with God hypocritically	Ignorantly.	p. 21.
			Not rejecting other Gods.	ibid.
			Not yielding up Self to God.	p. 22.
			Forcedly.	p. 23.
			Defectively.	p. 24.
			For the future.	ibid.
		Renouncing God.	Temporarily and weakly.	p. 25.
				p. 26.
	Relying in the		Excess, Tempting of God.	p. 27.
			Not trusting in God.	p. 30.
	Defect		Creature-confidence.	p. 32.
			Vain-confidence.	p. 34.
	Reflex, viz. Assurance	Careless to get it		p. 36.
			Carelessness of preserving it.	p. 38.
			Remissness in recovering it.	p. 39.
			An imaginary Assurance.	p. 45.
	Outward, viz. Confession of Faith	Confessing openly, even to suffering, without a Call.		ibid.
			Unpreparedness for Confession, when call'd thereunto.	p. 46.
			Refusing, or delaying so to do actually.	ibid.
			Dissembling in Confession.	p. 47.
			Denying Faith in God.	ibid.
		Making Shipwreck of Faith.		ibid.
		Confessing of Faith in God hypocritically.		p. 48.

Of Vain Curiosity.

Chap. I. *The Miscarriages opposite to the saving Knowledge of God; the apprehending*
All of Faith.

Vain Curiosity. Beware not only of prying into the affairs of your Neighbour, which no way concern you; but of enquiring into Gods Secrets. God hath made known, enough for our Salvation; but some things he hath concealed from us, and they do not belong unto us. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever. Have not you been guilty of not contenting your selves with Gods Revelations? Have not you desired and endeavoured to be wise above what is written? O the many curious and unprofitable questions, that have been framed about the Decrees of God, and the Works of Providence! We have not cried with the Apostle, *How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!* Have not some of you been for new lights? The Serpent beguiled Eve hereby: the first sin came in by an attempt to get forbidden knowledge. And what saith the Apostle I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Have not some had the same wild fancy, as the *Wegelians* had, That there is a time to come (which they call, *Seculum Spiritus Sancti*) in which God shall by his Spirit reveal much more knowledge and lights, than was revealed by Christ and his Apostles in the Scriptures? As one of our ill too inquisitive, *When Christ will come in his glory, when Babylon shall fall, when the Witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and ashes shall be at an end?* Christs own Disciples were not content with what Christ told them should be, but enquire, *When it should be?* Christ doth indeed give them many signs of his destination into *Jerusalem*, and of the end of the World; but tells them, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the Angels of Heaven, nor the Son of Man (as Man), but my Father only.* This Curiosity was also reproved by Christ, immediately before his Ascension,

Against vain Curiosity.

Deut. 29. 29.

1 Cor. 4. 6.

Rom. 11. 33.

Gen. 3. 5, 6.

2 Cor. 11. 3.

Gilesys's Miscellan. Questions, p. 131.

Caril on Job. 28. 21.

Mat. 24. 2, 3.

Mar. 13. 32.

Of Vain Curiosity.

Acts 1. 7.

1 Thel. 5. 1.

2 Tim. 2. 23.

Caril on Job
11. 12.

Those that
pry into the
secrets of
Princes, may
fear what
Ahasan met
with; and
those that pry
into the se-
crets of divine
mysteries, what
Penibens met
with. Baconi
Sapientia ve-
terum, Sect. 10.
Rom. 12. 3.
Psa. 25. 14.
Caril on Job,
28. 21.
Col. 3. 18.

Psa. 131. 1.

Rom. 12. 16.

Rom. 11. 33.

Rev. 5. 2.

tion, with, It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath put into his own power: And the Apostle Paul tells the Thessalonians, That such knowledge was needless for them: But of the times and seasons, Brethren, you have no need, that I write unto you. Even good men have sometimes a stronger desire to know the times, than to redeem the time. Hath not the knowledge of many lain in canvassing foolish and unlearned questions, which the Apostle bids Timothy to avoid, because they tend to strife? O! take heed of this sin for the future. It is a great Vanity. Man is vain (saith one) when he would be wise beyond his line, or in things above him, not in things about him, or fit for him. It is a sin that we are naturally prone too. Man naturally desires (as the same Author well observes) forbidden wisdom, and his desire is severer times stronger after it, as it is forbidden, than as it is wisdom. This is a sin very provoking unto God: To pry into, arcana imperij, the mysteries of their government is so unto Princes. No wonder that God hath been a consuming fire to us, seeing we have been so bold and daring Phaeons. Vain Curiosity is a presumptuous transgression: take heed of continuing guilty thereof any longer: for the future be wise unto sobriety. Though the secret of the Lord be with those that fear him, yet they, that fear him, will not, dare not, meddle with, nor search into his secrets. Take heed of breaking open of Gods Cabinet, entering into his Councils, prying into his Ark once more: beware of suffering your imagination to wax wan- con; and run riot, yet mad about troubles, and meet niceties any more: take heed of intruding (as the Apostle speaks significantly to this point) into things which you have not seen, yet, which cannot be seen, being vainly puff up by your fleshy mind. There is (saith the same judicious Expositor) flesh in the understanding, as well as in the will and affections of man, and in the flesh, there is pride, and it is pride, that makes men so busie and bold; so boldly busie, as (canst thou say forbidden) to intrude into such things. O! say now with David, Lord, mine heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither will I exaltise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Such are things not revealed: they are not only high things, but above the lawfulness of mans search: they are termed not *arcana* mysterij, but rather *arcana* scientia, things not to be enquired into. Who is able to open the Book? Who, but the Lyon of the Tribe of Judah?

The

The best of Gods Saints are so much to expound the contents of the Book, wherein the mysteries of Providence lye couped, and infolded, that they may not so much as nrye the classes. A bold enquiry here is not more irreverent, than full of danger. When men walk on sleep places, they are subject to fall: so here, by meddling with high things, an error, yea heresie, is quickly incurred.

Genit. quasi sa-
crilega temerari-
tatis est, ut plur
scire cupias,
quam finis.
Salis.

2. Ignorance. I do not say, take heed of Nescience, of not knowing those things, which you are not bound to know, or have not means to know; in the former Section I have cautioned you against such science: But beware of Ignorance, of not knowing what you ought to know, and what you have means to know. Hath not this been your sin? Hath not Jesus Christ come in flaming fire against this sin? O that it may be your sin no more! What is it yet nothing to you, that your Souls should remain as *Lanterns* without *Candles* in them? Is it yet nothing to you, to want eye sight, to have *blind Souls*? to have the Gospel still hid from you, as so many *lost Souls*, blinded by the god of this world? Have you no mind as yet to be freed from Satans slavery? Satan doth indeed sometimes transform himself into an *Angel of light*; but he alwayes loves to dwell in a dark house, in an ignorant Soul: Though his Name be *admirable*, and he hath much knowledge himself, yet he hates and binds knowledge in man: He knows, he hath more more fast, than those that lye in the dark Dungeon of Ignorance, bound in the chains of darkness. Is it nothing to you, to continue still stark naught, without any goodness in your hearts? As the mind is, so is the man. Without knowledge, the heart is not good. For any to say, Though I am ignorant, yet mine heart is good, is as if one should say, Though I am blind, yet mine eyes are good. Those that had the leprose in the head, were to be judged unclean. Is it nothing to you, still to remain *useless unto others*? Is it nothing to you, to be even in such times as these, without an interest in God, *strangers from the life of God*, through Ignorance, so as none of Gods offers of himself do yet prevail with you? Is it nothing to you, to continue prepared for ruine? The people that understand not, shall not only stumble, but fall: they are totally perished. O ye ignorant Professors! the great day of Gods wrath is coming, and how will ye be able to stand? O that you would yet know the things, that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes!

Against Ignorance.

Eph. 4. 18.
2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
Goodwins
Evangelical
Communi-
cane.
Δαίμων q.
Sathan, Ina-
rus, peritus.
Leigh. crit.
sacr.

Prov. 19. 2.

Eph. 4. 18.

Hof. 4. 14.

Rev. 6. 17.

Luc. 19. 42.

Against Er-
rour.

Brook's Satans
wiles.

Rom. 1. 28.

1 cor. 3. 11,
12, 13, 14, 15.

2 Thes. 2. 10,
11, 12.

Judg. 8. 13.

Jam. 1. 16.

Pla. 25. 9.

3. *Errour.* Take heed not only of not apprehending, but of *mis apprehending* God, and the things of God. Hath not this been your sin? Have not your apprehensions concerning God been very erroneous? Have not some Professors thought, That there is no God, nor Devil, nor Heaven, nor Hell, but what is within us; and that sin and grace were equally of God, and agreeable to his will? O! Be not alwayes deceived concerning the Providence of God; his Worship, his Ministry, his House, his Discipline in his house, &c. Is it nothing to you, to be under the Gentiles heavy and dreadful Plague, to be given up to a reprobate mind; a mind void of judgement, a mind disallowed, rejected, and abhorred of God; a mind that all have cause to be ashamed of? Is it nothing to you, to suffer loss in Gods refining fire? Is it nothing to you, still to entertain that whorish woman, that hath cast down many, wounded many, yea slain many, many strong men, many great men, many learned men, yea many professing men? Is it nothing to you, to be still in danger of Gods tending upon you strong delusions, or (as the Greek hath it, *tripping wisdom*) the efficacy of error; that you should believe a lye, the lye of lyes, viz. Popery, that you may be damned? Ah Souls! Can you seriously consider these hints, and those you have in the Gospel glass; chap. 9. and not dread, and stand upon your guard, against every Errour in Religion? True hatred is to the whole kind. It is sad to frown on one Errour, and to smile on another. Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard, and yet the bastard destroyed all the rest. One turn may bring a man quite out of his way. Ah Lord! (said one) this mercy I humbly beg, that thou wouldst rather take me, and do anything with me, than to give me up to these sad Errours, to which thousands have married their Souls, and are in a way of perishing eternally. O! Do not erre, my beloved Brethren. Take heed therefore of pride, of that proud Curiosity I have already cautioned you against. The meek, or humble (as the word signifieth) will be guide in judgement, the meek will be teach his way. The same Author tells of a man, who, seeing in a Vision many squares of the Devil, spread upon the earth, sat down musing, and said within himself, Who shall pass through these? Whereunto he heard a voice answering, Humility shall pass through them. To persist wilfully in Errour is Diabolical. It were we never erred; next to that, that we amend our Errours.

Take

Take heed of being *contentious* against the truth, and *disobedient* to the truth, when made known unto you : yea take heed of *voluntary sluggishness*, and an affected *laxiness*, as to *searching out of Truth*, which cannot but *expose* a man to *Error*, for Truth doth commonly keep so much State, as not to reveal her self to any, but those who studiously seek her. Take heed also of *Covetousness*. In a word, be careful to subdue all your inordinate affections; for they are of great force to sway the Judgement.

Rom. 2. 8.

1 Tim. 6. 10.

4. *Unteachablenesse*. Take heed of unwillingness to get *clear* and *right apprehensions* of God. Hath not this been your sin? Against Un-teachablenesse. Have not you been not only *ignorant* and *erroneous*, but *unwilling* to be instructed? Have not you been not only *destitute* of, *Aliud est ne-scire, aliud nolle scire.* but *opposite* to, the saving knowledge of God? Light hath been offered; but have not you shut your eyes against it? And if some light hath broke in upon you, you have *not liked to retain* God in your knowledge. Have you not wilfully *rejected knowledge*? and hath not God therefore *rejected you*? Have not you *cast off* the knowledge of God, with *contempt*, and *despise*, as the word *Rom. 1. 19.* signifyeth? Have not you *cast off the means* of knowledge? And hath not God therefore *took away the means* of knowledge? *Hof. 4. 6. See Bur. on the place:* Have not you thought, that you must *bulie* your heads about some other matters, and that you may do well enough without this knowledge, if you do but know how to trade, and to mannage your worldly businesses? Have not you *rejected* the knowledge of that Truth especially, that should have brought you to the true worship of God, as those Priests did the knowledge, that they must worship God at *Jerusalem*, for fear of losing their estates? Hath not God therefore, in an extraordinary manner, *rejected you*? So much is noted (thinks *Tremellius*) by the redundancy of a letter in the word for Gods rejecting, not found elsewhere in all the Scripture. Have not you even studied to be *ignorant* of God? Have not you therefore been for *unteaching Priests*, and *humane inventions*, in the worship of God, which kept out of the Land of Israel the knowledge of God? No wonder that God hath a *controversie* with the Land, no wonder that God is contending with *English Professors* in a way of judgement; no wonder if there be *no peace* in England, to him that goeth out, and cometh in, but great vexations upon all the Inhabitants, God *vexing us with all adversity.* *Burroughs on Hof. 4. 1.* *2 Chron. 15. 31.*

Of resting in a Form of Knowledge.

sty. So it was with Israel in the like case, Israel was without the true God, i. e. the true worship of God, and without a teaching Priest, and in those times there was no peace, &c. No wonder that God hath made us to see, seeing we would not see: No wonder that God is departed from us, seeing we have said, at least in our hearts, Depart, for we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes. Your Ignorance hath much incensed God against you; but your Unteachableness much more. O! acquaint now thy self with him. I beseech you now, now that the hand of God is out against your selves, in some kind or other; now that the hand of God is much heavier upon others; now acquaint your selves with him, now or never; now, or else he will not be at peace with you, and good will not come unto you. Let it not alwayes be said, They know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness. O! unto reading and hearing, add praying, that you may not only be Book-taught, but God-taught. You need not ascend up into Heaven, to bring Christ down from above, nor to descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from the dead, that you may be acquainted with him; the Word is nigh you, which being read, heard, and prayed over, will give you that knowledge of God and Christ, which is life eternal.

Hsa. 26. 11.

Job 21. 14:
see Brinsl. yon
Job 22. 21.

Psa. 82. 5.

Rom. 10. 6.

John 17. 3.

Against resting
in a Form
of Know-
ledge.

Rom. 2. 20.

Mop. 6. 10.
Ei. 1. 1. 1. 1.
Hef. 1. 1. 1. 1.
swida.

Jam 3: 17:

2 cor: 2: 14:

It is tearmed
by the school-
men, *sapida*
scientia, or
scientia iustus
1. 1. 1. 1.

Jer: 10: 14:

§. Resting in a Form of Knowledge. The word signifieth the *show*, the appearance, the *image* of Knowledge. Hath not this been your sin? Have not you affected the reputation of knowledge, more than the reality of knowledge? Hath not the Name been better esteemed by you, than the Thing? Have not you satisfied your selves with a dark and confused knowledge? Hath not your light been darkness? The wisdom from above is pure, and therefore clear and distinct. Have not you satisfied your selves with a *sapless* knowledge, without the *savour*, that is in saving knowledge? Knowledge in Scripture doth connore affection; and that, which carrieth not the heart and affections with it, deserveth not the name of Knowledge; and therefore those, that did not *like* and love God, are said, *not to know God*. Have not you satisfied your selves without an *experimental* knowledge of God, of the exercise of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy, &c. for your eternal welfare, in working effectually upon your hearts, by his Word and Spirit? Have not you satisfied your selves with an *unactive* knowledge? To have notions according to Knowledge, and actions according to Ignorance, is to be *drunken* in

in knowledge. Have not you set up your rest, in such a knowledge as is short of making men live peaceably, humbly, obediently, and believably, as saving knowledge doth? This kind of knowledge, is but a form of knowledge, without the truth, substance, and reality of knowledge; as a form of godliness, is the appearance of godliness, without the power of godliness. The knowledge of God doth not consist in a few barren notions concerning God, which do not render us better in our lives, or liker unto God. He knew no sin, in Paul; is in Peter, He did no sin. To depart from evil, is understanding. They have a good understanding, that do his Commandments. Josiah was strict in performing his known duty, And was not this, To know me, saith the Lord? Such as do not awake to righteousness, (the Greek is awake righteously) i. e. that do not give their minds and endeavours to righteousness, they have not the knowledge of God. Have not you satisfied your selves, without knowing God in and through Christ? Here let it be minded, that the Object of that Faith, that is required in the first Commandment, in all its acts, both direct and reflect, inward and outward, is God in Christ, or interest in God in and through Christ. The Deity, Father, Son, and Spirit, is the ultimate Object; but Jesus Christ, God dwelling in flesh, is the more immediate Object thereof. Christ leads us by the hand, and we are said by Christ to believe on God, that our Faith might be in God. But have you ever had a real and intuitive light of Jesus Christ in his glory, not only from report, nor only from his works, nor only from the bare letter of the Word, but from the Spirit? Have you ever beheld such a glory in Christ's person, as hath caused you to esteem him in all his glory, as your present, greatest and only good? Hath God ever given you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? If not, you must repent of your Knowledge under the notion of Ignorance; and be sure, that for the future you be restless after a clear, distinct, savory, experimental, alive Knowledge of God in Christ.

6. Not growing in Knowledge. Is not saving knowledge a growing thing? Were not the rising and increasing of the waters of the Sanctuary a type thereof? But alas! have not the best set up their rest in low attainments of saving knowledge? Have not some conceited themselves taught by God immediately, by the Spirit, and needed not any of Gods mediate teachings, by the

2 Tim: 3: 5:
Verba nuntia
constant effe-
ctum & effectum.

Job 28: 28:
Psa: 111: 10:

Jer: 23, 16:

1 cor: 15: 34:

T: Goodwin's
Christ set
forth, p: 10:

Eph: 2: 18:
1 Pet: 1: 21:

Shepherd on
the parable of
the Virgin, p:
74, 75, 202,
203, 204:

2 cor: 4: 6:

Against not
growing in
Knowledge:
Ezek: 47: 3,
4, 5:

1 cor: 8: 2:

John 17: 3:

2 Petr: 3: 18:

Luc: 2: 40:

Phil: 3: 12,

13, 14:

the ministry of man, or by the Scriptures? As for such, whatever knowledge they pretend to, the truth is, they are altogether without the saving knowledge of God. *At he (saith one) who thinks himself so good, that he cannot be better, was never so good as he should be: So he that thinks he knows so much, as he can learn no more, from the Scriptures, and Ministry, knows nothing as he ought.* As for those, that have the beginnings of life eternal, in the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ, certainly it hath been their great fault, that they have not made conscience of growing in knowledge daily; both of getting the knowledge of more duties, and of more sins; and more of the goodness of those duties, and of the evil of those sins, which they knew already, as they ought. How seldom have Sermons been attended for this very end? How seldom have Ministers been consulted with for this very end? *Doth not your not growing in grace evidence, that you have not grown in knowledge?* The Apostle puts both together; *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;* to hint to us, that in proportion to our spiritual growth in knowledge, is our growth in grace. *Is not your neglect of growing in knowledge, evident in your decays in knowledge; not seeing so much evil in sin, especially such and such particular sins; nor so much good in duty, especially such and such particular duties; nor so much beauty in truth, especially such and such particular truths; nor so much deformity in error, especially such and such particular errors, as formerly.* No wonder that God deals with us, as he hath threatened to deal with them, that know him not. No wonder if God seem to resolve, that this generation of English Professors, shall not enter into the promised Canaan; *They were those that had not known Gods wayes, to whom the Lord swore, that they should not enter into his rest.* To prevent this, let us all be Riri'd up, to conform more and more to Jesus Christ, who grew in wisdom, as well as in stature. Let us write after Paul's copy, *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend, that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before; I press toward the mark. *Can* Would you, have God take away all your talents? Take heed then, of neglecting to increase

Of neglecting to make use of Knowledge:

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increase them. *Then shall yee know, if yee follow on to know the Lord. The path of the just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more, till it be perfect Day.* "He (saith one) that hath the least saving acquaintance with God, hath enough to make him thankful; but he that hath the most, hath not enough to make him idle.

Hof. 6. 3.
Prov. 4. 13,

7. *Neglecting to make use of Knowledge.* Hath not this been your sin? Hath not the habit of knowledge layn dead in your Souls? Hath it not been an useles and an unprofitable thing, both as to your selves, and others? O that it may be your sin no more! Be not satisfied with having Lights, or Lamps, but *Let your Lights be burning*, or shining. Make use of your knowledge, for the heating of your affections, for the stirring up desires after God, love to God, delight in God, hatred of sin, fear of offending God, &c. As the Spouse, *He is altogether lovely: This is my Beloved.* Let the knowledge of wisdom be unto your Souls, as Honey, that is good, and the Honey-comb; which is sweet unto the tast. Make use of your knowledge for the guiding of your thoughts words and actions. Let wisdom guide you in every step you take. Ask of your knowledge continually, what saith the Rule? what doth the Word of God require? Make use of your knowledge in bearing witness to truth, for which you came into this World. When you come to appear for an opposed truth, let not your knowledge be to seek. Make use of your knowledge for the preserving of your Souls from theoretical and practical miscarriages. Seeing yee know, &c. beware lest yee also be led away with the error of the wicked. If you will make use of your knowledge, you have Gods promise for preservation from snares in judgment, and defilements in practice. The Devil shall not undermine you by policy, nor overcome you by power. Make use of your knowledge for the good of others. One great end of knowledge is to communicate knowledge. And indeed (as one well observes) to know for our own and others good is the only good knowledge. To reject the directions of knowledge, as well as the means of knowledge is to reject knowledge. And hath not God therefore rejected you? Is not God reckoning with his wicked, because foolish servants, for letting their Talents lie un-improved? Yea, is not this a greater judgment than any outward judgments you are under? Is it not an evidence of a Souls being under a spirit of slumber, to have no more use of its knowledge, then one

Against not making use of knowledge.

Luc. 12. 35.

Cant. 5. 18.

Prov. 24. 13, 14

Prov. 6. 22.

John 18. 36.

2 Pet. 3. 16:
Prov. 2. 17,
12, 16.

Bar. on Hof. 4. 6

Isa. 29. 10.

C

all:cp

asleep hath? Not to use is all one as not to have knowledge. He that hath not, i. e. that doth not make use of what he hath, shall have what he hath, or seems to have, taken away from him.

Chap. II. The miscarriages opposite to Believing God & The Asenting Act of Faith.

Against credulity.

Prov. 14. 15.

Mar. 4. 24.

Mat. 7. 15.

Jer. 23. 16.

Mar. 8. 15.

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula, &c.

Prov. 9. 18.

1 Thes. 5. 21.

Caution on Job

Job 12. 11.

Vain Credulity. Hath not this been your sin? Have not you been so simple as to believe every word, pretending to come from God? Have not you been ready to hearken to false Teachers? Though God hath said, Take heed what you hear: Beware of false Prophets: Hearken not unto the words of the Prophets, that prophesie unto you, they make you vain, they speak a Vision of their own heart: Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod; yet how fool-hardy and venturesome have you been? O the sad consequences of this fool-hardiness! Eve lost all by hearing one Sermon from the mouth of the Serpent. Julian the Emperor, sipe in his Apostasie by hearing Libanius, the Sophister. Let others, yea your own harms, make you to beware. O! come not any more near the door of their house. Knowest thou not that the dead are there, and that their guests are in the depth of Hell? Say not, you must try all things; Christians ought indeed to prove all things in the Articles, sentes, the Doctrines, that Christs own Ministers teach them; they must bring to the touch-stone of the Word; But he that will adventure to tast of every box and glass in an apothecaries shop, may sooner meet with poison, than with nutriment. Have not you been ready to receive and reject Doctrines, before you have brought them to the touch-stone and ballance of the Sanctuary, to be tryed? Before you receive or reject a piece of gold, you will go to the touch-stone to try whether it be good mettall, or no, and to the ballance to try whether it be weight, or no; But have you not dealt otherwise with the Doctrines you have heard? Hath your ear tryed the words, that have sounded therein? The Original word for an ear (as an excellent Expositor observes) being of the dual Number, signifieth a pair of ballances, to note, that we should not only hear, but weigh. But have not you received Doctrines upon trust? Have not some given an absolute credence to the Church, to a Synod, to a Council? Have not others to this

and

Of sinful Incredulity.

11

and the other singular person, if a learned Man, or a pious Man, if a Pastor, or a Teacher, especially, if pretending the spirit of Revelation? But what saith the Apostle? *We beseech you, brethren, that yee be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us; not by spirit, those that pretend prophetic revelations; nor word, those that plead traditions; nor letter, those that urge forged records.* It was the Ebreans commendation, that they would not trust Paul upon his word, but tryed his Doctrine by the Scriptures. *Have not you also rejected Doctrines upon trust?* It is as dangerous (saith one) to refuse, as to receive, what we have not examined. No wonder that we, that have been so ready to *inlave our consciences* to Men, be given up to so *soar a bondage*. *They shall be his servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the Kingdoms of the Country; i. e. That they may know the difference between them: the bondage of the one, and the liberty of the other.* O that this may be your sin no more. why should ye be any longer willing to be the servants of Men, seeing one is your Master, which is Christ?

2 Thess. 2. 2.

Acts 17. 11.

2 Chrsr. 12. 8d
Shepherd's
wholesome
caveat for a
time of liber-
ty. p. 32

Alb on 2 Chrs
30. 8.
1 Cor. 7. 23.
mar. 23. 10.

a. *Sinful Incredulity.* The assenting act of faith is a full persuasion of any truth upon a divine testimony. The Hebrews, the Greeks, the Latines express it by such words, as import *believing*, or *giving credit* to. Many think all Infidels are without the pale among Turks and Heathens; But alas! are not too many found in the bosoms of Churches? The Israelites were Gods people, and yet destroyed in the Wilderness, because they believed not. And may not we fear destruction for our unbelief? Are not we still guilty of not believing that God is what God is, and what God saith? One well observes, that *all sin comes from Atheisme*; for who would sin, did he then verily believe, that there were a God, that saw all, and would punish all? And such a God, God must be, or no God. And all sin tends to Atheisme; for sin wipes out all the notions of a Deity, as much as it can. And when we are in sin we must be either willing to get out of it by Repentance, or else we shall be willing to turn Atheists. Guilt always (saith another) begets fear; and fear, hatred and hatred strikes at the being of the object hated; as is evident in *Maledictions*, desiring there were no Law, nor Judge. Do not we say in our hearts, *there is no God*, to the Lord the inner doth. It is Atheisme (saith one) when Men do but in their hearts say, that it is all vanity which is spoken of God.

Against Incre-
dulity.

TONY
Illustrat
Credere, fidem
habere, testi-
monium ac-
cipere.

Capel of rem-
prations, page
153, 154.

25. 25. 101
DISEQUOON
14. 09. 01. 101

Bates on
Reb. 11. 6.
in 24. E. 23. 8.
page 55.
Godolphins holy
Arbor, page 173

Are not we still guilty of not believing what God is? Do not we deny, if not expressly, yet consequentially Gods absolute dominion to command us: the goodness as well as righteousness of the law of God, by which we ought to be ruled: that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and the avenger of his adversaries; that he sees our thoughts afar off, and that our greatest secrets are naked and open to, anatomized, and dissected before, his eyes: that he is good, yea the chief good? Are not we still guilty of not believing what God saith, which of us is yet fully persuaded that our losses for Christ shall be made up with the hundred fold in this life; because he hath said, *Verily, there is no Man that hath left House, or Parents, or Brethren, or Wife, or Children, for the Kingdom of Gods sake, who shall not receive many-fold in this present time: He shall (according to Matthew) receive an hundred fold?* Which of us yet believes that God will repay what ever we lay out for his poor servants, because he hath said, *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that, which he hath given, will he pay him again?* Which of us yet believes, that if we will be Christs witnesses, none of the World will cordially love us; because he hath said, *ye shall be hated of all Men for my names sake?* Which of us yet believes that all Hells and the Worlds hatred can do a Child of God no hurt, because he hath said, *Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my Names sake?* We are indeed apt to beguile ourselves and others, in professing that we receive Gods testimony in all that he speaks; but the Apostle tells us, there is a denial of God in works, as well as in words: and certainly denial in works is the strongest denial, and manifests that our affirming what God saith in words is but meer hypocrisie: that we do but flatter God with our mouth, and lie unto him with our tongues. Are not we still guilty of neglecting to get our hearts more and more established in believing that God is, what God is, and what God saith? Is not this a lamentation, and should it not be for a lamentation? Should we not mainly repent of our unbelief, seeing it is not only the provocation, but the cause of all our other provocations? No wonder that God hath shamed the throne of our glory, seeing we have rob'd God of his glory by our unbelief? What is Gods declarative glory, but his reputation in the World? Unbelief takes away Gods reputation,

Of Unsettledness in Religion.

13

it makes him of no credit in the World, it makes him a *liar*. By unbelief we attempt to make the faith of God, i. e. his faithfulness, of none effect. O! repent, repent that God, who is no debtor to you, who was never worse then his word, hath so little credit with you, who profess to be his servants, his children, his spouses. No wonder that we are kept in the *Wilderness*, yea in a manner brought back into *Egypt*: We may thank our unbelief for shutting us out of *Canaan*. They could not enter in because of unbelief. No wonder that Gods promises, the only solid grounds of comfort in times of trial, do not, cannot, comfort us: alas! they have no credit with us. We faint, because we believe not. O that this sin may be your sin no more! Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you for the future an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and thereby God be provoked to depart further and further from you, until he hath left you totally and finally.

1 John 5:10.
Rom. 3. 3.

Heb: 3: 19:

Psal: 27: 13:

Hebr: 3: 12:

3 *Unsettledness in Religion* Hath not this been your sin, yea, is it not still your sin? Who believes without wavering, without any fear lest the contrary should prove true? Are not you troubled with a *Vertigo* in your Heads, a giddiness in your understandings? Have not some thought *Scepticism* very tollerable? Hath not the Apostle said, *stand fast in the faith: Be established in the faith, as you have been taught, &c.* Beware lest any spoyle you through philosophy and vain deceit: be not soon shaken in mind? And yet have not many been for an *Academical* and *Pyrrhonian* demur and dubitation concerning Scripture Revelations? Have not more been actually carried about, as wheels, as chaff, as waves, as clouds, with every wind of doctrine? Have not you turned round, as wheels, with the times and places, where you lived? Have not you been up and down; now of this mind, then of that, embracing and following those opinions, and ways, which the times have smiled upon? Have not you been whirled about by the times, as chaff by the wind? Have not you been wavering, as a wave of the Sea, which is never standing still, if there be any wind stirring? Have not some of you been carried quite round about the Card and Compass, as the Clouds of the Aire are from one quarter of the Heaven to another? Have not you been thus carried about with divers and strange Doctrines, with Doctrines differing from the truth, and strange to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament? Are not you yet unestablished, yea, are

Against un-
settledness.

1 Cor: 16: 13:
Col: 2: 6, 7, 8:
2 Thes: 2: 2:

Brinsley's spiri-
tual Vertigo: p:
9, 10, 11, &c.

Jam: 1: 6:]

Hebr: 13: 9:

Of Unsetledness in Religion.

not you careless in seeking after establishment? Are not you still even indifferent whether you pray to God to establish you, as David did, yea, or no? Whether you enjoy the Sacrament of the Lords Supper (that heart-establishing Ordinance) duly administered, yea, or no? Whether you continue fellowship with established Christians, yea, or no? Do not you still stagger at the promises of God, viz. that God will be a Sun and a Shield, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly: that Babylon is fallen, is fallen, i. e. shall as certainly fall, and that utterly, as if she were so fallen already: that there shall be a resurrection of the dry bones, &c. Do not you still dispute the promises in your thoughts? Do not you still doubt whether God will be as good as his word, and that because of the difficulties that lie in the way? All staggering at the promises of God is from unbelief. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. Is not this also a matter of just and deep Lamentation to see so many Professors, some of which were formerly looked upon as sober and stayed Christians, now reeling and staggering (like drunken Men) to and fro, carried this way, and that way, as the wind blows? Should any of you, whilst your selves stand safe upon the shore, see others though strangers, much more if friends, tossed upon the waves, among rocks and quick sands, ready to perish every moment; might it not be presumed, that it would affect, the faintest heart among you? and can you see the souls of your brethren and sisters thus tossed to and fro without any trouble to your own souls? But alas! who stands fast and safe upon the shore? Are not all your hearts unsetled? And what! will yee not pity your own unstable souls? Is it nothing to you, to be under Reubens reproach? Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. A double minded Man is unstable in all his ways. Are not you in danger of being utterly ruined in this hour of temptation, that is come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth? Are not you in danger of being spoiled, of being made a prey? O! your unbelieving staggerings grieve the heart of your Lord. The Holy Ghost, speaking of the unbelieving Jews, tells us, Jesus was grieved for the hardness of their hearts: And shall they not grieve your hearts? It is a wonder that God hath spared you so long. O faithless and perverse Generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? O! sin no more in this kind. O that henceforth yee be no more children tossed to and fro,

Rom: 4: 20:
Brinsley, &c:
p: 98:

Gen: 49: 4:
Jam: 1: 8:

Col. 2. 8.
Ne sit, qui vos
depradetur.
Beza in loc.
mar: 3: 5:

fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lye in wait to deceive!

O! Be not carried about with divers and strange Doctrines: for it is a good thing, that the heart be established with grace. Be restless, till the Word come unto you in much assurance: Be restless, till you have attained unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, &c. Seek heart-establishment from God, for your selves and others, as Peter doth, Now the God of all grace, &c. make you perfect, stablish, strengthen you: And David, Stablish me with thy free Spirit. Neglect neither the Word, nor Sacrament, administered after the right order. O! Forsake not the assembling of your selves together, as the manner of some is. Trees stand firmer in the Wood or Grove, where they have company, than in the Field, where they stand alone.

Eph. 4. 14.
Brinsley, &c.

206, &c.

Hebr. 13. 9.

1 Thec. 1. 5:

ἡ ἀνταρραχία

τοῦ λόγου

Col. 2. 2.

1 Peter 5. 10:

Psa. 51. 12.

Hebr. 10. 25:

4. *Resting in a Dead Faith.* Hath not this been your sin?

Have not you satisfied your selves with a Faith, that is but the carcase of saving believing? The Apostle, in making mention of a dead faith, alludeth to a corps, or a dead plant, which have only an outward similitude and likeness to those which are living. Saving belief is an assent wrought in the Soul, by the sanctifying Spirit, and built upon a Divine Testimony. But is not our belief, the effect of natural reason, further enlightened (at most) by the assistance of the Spirit? Do not we remain unsanctified, notwithstanding our believing? Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. Have we any further assurance of what we believe, than that which Reason suggests? Were ever the things believed, evident to any spiritual sense within us? Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Is not our belief grounded only upon an humane testimony? We call that a Divine Testimony, (saith one of the Western Worthies) which is given by the Spirit of God, to that Spirit which is within a regenerate person. For (saith he) unto any testimony two things are required; First, The manifesting and presenting that which is to be credited or believed. Secondly, An ability in him, to whom it is witnessed, to understand it; otherwise the proposing any thing by discourse to a beast, that wants reason to understand speech, or the relating of any thing to a man, that hath reason, in the Greek tongue, who understands no language but English, is no testimony, no more than it is to a deaf man, that cannot hear: Wherefore, to make a Divine testimony,

Against resting
in a Dead
Faith.

Manton on

John 2. 17.

White's Direc-
tions, p. 51,
92, &c.

1 John 5: 1:

Hebr. 11: 13

White, &c: p:
95, 96, &c:

1 Jo: 5: 20:

Rom: 8: 16:

White, &c: p:
98, 99:Baxter's Di-
vine Life, on
John 17: 3:

testimony, there must be both Gods testifying unto man, and also a mind in him able to understand that Revelation. First, The Spirit of God must reveal and manifest unto a man that Truth, that is to be believed, as the light discovers any visible object. Next, There must be in that man, a light planted in his heart, (which the Apostle calls, An understanding to know him, that is true) as the light or visual-faculty is planted in the eye, or else he cannot comprehend that light, that shines unto him. — The evidence then, which a true believer hath of any truth of God, which he embraceth, is the manifesting of that truth unto the Spirit, not only by a form of words, to the natural understanding, but beyond that, by a kind of demonstration unto the spiritual mind; as the evidence of any object to the eye, is by the shining of the light upon it, which makes it to appear to be such as it is. This kind of testifying, or evidencing things, in a spiritual way, the Apostle calls, The witnessing of Gods Spirit, with our Spirit, mentioning expressly two Spirits, whereof, if either be wanting, there can be no Divine testimony. But is not our belief grounded upon the testimony of Reason, upon the consonancy of Scripture-revelations to right Reason? And is not the testimony of reason an humane testimony? Yea, Do not we believe upon an humane testimony, when we believe anything written in the Scriptures, for the testimony of the Scriptures, If that we believe the Scriptures themselves, upon the general consent of the Church, or upon the probability and reasonableness of the things therein delivered, or upon the observation of the truth of those writings in most things, which all make up but an humane testimony? This the same learned and judicious Divine proves thus, “The assent unto one thing for another, is built upon that, to which we first give our assent: as a stone in a wall, though it lyes immediately upon that stone, that is next under it, yet it is indeed supported by the foundation, which bears up all the building. We say, we do believe; but is not our Assent without suitable impressions upon our hearts, and without a suitable carriage in our lives? Doth the reality of Gods being believed, make us look upon our selves, and all things, as nothing without God, as nothing in comparison of God; and to let the being and reality of our love, desire, and endeavours, be let out upon the most real and transcendent Being? Doth the belief of Gods Unity, contract and unite our stragling affections, and call them home from manifold

Serious Vanity? Doth the belief of Gods *Immensity* and *Incomprehensibility*, fill our Souls with *admiration*? Doth the belief of Gods *Eternity*, draw our Souls from *transitory* to *eternal* things? Doth the belief of Gods *Simplicity*, make us in *love* with *holy simplicity*? Doth the belief of Gods *Invisibilty*, make us *mostly esteem and value things invisible*? Doth the belief of Gods *Immutability*, beget in us *unchangeable resolutions* for God? Doth the belief of Gods *Almightiness*, fill us continually with *holy fear*, and *promote trusting in him*? Doth the belief of Gods *Wisdom*, make us *delight in the wisdom which is from above*, and to *choose God for our Teacher and Counsellor*? Doth the belief of Gods *Goodness*, fill our Souls with a *superlative love unto God*, and *industrious desires to be conformed to his goodness in our measure*? Doth the belief of Gods *Holiness*, cause us to have *most high and honourable esteems of holiness in the creature*, and to *fall in love with it*, and *wholly conform our selves to Gods holiness in Christ*? Doth the belief of Gods *Truth* and *Faithfulness*, make us *resolved for duty*, and *in holy life*, seeing the *commands of God are serious*, and the *promises and threats true*? The true and sound assent to any Divine Revelation, as an holy truth, includeth a *correspondency in the believer to the thing believed*: Such an assent descends from the *understanding to the affections*, and so to the *conversation*. True Faith, and right Obedience, cannot be separated; for he that believeth the truth of Gods promises, fill'd with such things as he doth most want, must needs *desire the good contained in them*; and seeing God hath declared the effect of his promises, attainable only in ways of obedience, if he neglect that means, it is manifest he doth not desire the end. Certainly, if our assent doth not, cannot act, no more than a dead body can rise and walk, it is but a *dead faith*. The Apostle doth not say (as one well observes) *Faith is dead without works*, but *Faith without works is dead*. There is a difference between these predictions, as there is between those, *A man without motion is dead*, and *a man is dead without motion*. Works are not the cause, that give life to Faith; but yet they are the effects, that argue life in Faith. Faith is not *always alike lively*; but yet it is *always living*, and *operation is the necessary effect of life*. O! What cause have we to *repent of our dead Faith*? And what! Shall it *always remain dead*? Take heed, I beseech you, not only of

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Setting

Manton on
Jam: 2: 20:

setting up your rest in a *Knowledge*, but in a *Faith*, *falsely so called*. Take heed of pleasing your selves any longer with the *name* of Faith, and remaining desirous of the *virtue* of Faith, for the *crucifying* your faults and corruptions, and *conforming* your hearts and lives to the Commandements of God. To *assent* to truth, with the *neglect* of goodness, or with *lazy desires* after goodness, is but a *vain Faith*. That assent that doth not now *subdue sin*, will not *suppress fear*, when you come to dye. What! will ye not yet bury your *dead one* of your sight?

Gen. 23. 4.

Chap. III. *The Miscarriages, opposite to Consenting to have God to be your God, the third All of Faith.*

Against refusing God.

Refusing God. Beware of still refusing to have the true God to be a God unto you, and a God over you; to have him to be your *Portion* and *Sovereign*. To be

Gen. 17. 1, 7.

Rom. 9. 5.

Ephes. 4. 6.

Ob. Sedgwick's
Fountain
opened, &c.,
chap. 6.

God; implies to be *enough unto all*, to be an *all-sufficient* and *self-sufficient* good; and to be *over all*, and *above all*, to be an *all-commanding* good. To refuse God, is to refuse to place our happiness in him, and to come under his government. Hath not this been your sin? God hath offered himself to be your *chief good*, and *absolute Sovereign*; but have not you refused such offers? Yes, do not you still refuse them? There are many degrees of refusing (as one well observes). Although we may be free of some of them, yet are not we comprized in some one or other of them? Are not some guilty of refusing by way of *presumptuous persecution*? Are not others by way of *malicious opposition*? Are not others by way of *scornful derision*? Are not others by way of *open* (though not *malicious*) *resistance*? And if we be not guilty of any of these refusings, yet are not we guilty of refusing by way of *dissent*, or *unpersuasion*? Are not we yet unpersuaded to accept of God upon his own terms? Certainly there is no medium 'twixt Faith and Infidelity: 'twixt receiving of God, and refusing of God. He that is not with me (saith Christ) is against me. He, that doth not accept of God, doth refuse him. That *Chapman*, that will not take your Wares at your price, in so doing, he doth refuse them. That *Woman*, that *dissents*, that will not consent, that such a man should be her

her Husband, refuseth to marry with him. Are not you still unperswaded to have God himself for your Portion, to place your happiness in him, and absolute Soveraign, to come under his government? Is not this evident in the remaining deafness of the ears of your Souls? Not to give ear to, or not to obey the Word of the Lord, is to reject it; and to reject the Word of God, is to reject God himself. My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me. Were you ever yet effectually called? Did God ever yet speak in such a voice, as could not but be heard, as could not be withstood? If yet your ears are deaf unto the calls of God, if yet you are able to withstand the voice of God, certainly you do still refuse him. Do not your hearts remain obdurate? Do the offers of God make any impression on them? Is any favour of God to be found in them? Alas! Gods offers do not move or stir them cordially to desire the enjoyment of him, and subjection to him. Do not our worthless thoughts of God still continue? Do not we still think, that God is not worth so much pains, so many prayers, so much bearing, so much time, so many sighs and tears, &c. Alas! which of us accounts Gods offers the best bargains? That which a man counts to be his best bargain, he will (saith the same Author) (1.) Make all things to give way to that. (2.) Make that to fill up his desire. (3.) It will draw forth his choicest diligence and pains. (4.) He will be at some loss to gain it. (5.) He is peremptory, and unmoveably earnest for the enjoyment of it. (6.) The fruition of it presents unto him the sweetest joy. Do we thus account closing with God best, Best of all? Where then are our present cares to get God himself? Where are our strong fears lest we miss of God? Where are our full desires, and peremptory and steadfast resolutions to be the Lords, as well as to have God to be ours? What will we part with for God? Whence comes in our sweetest joy? To them that believe, &c. receive Christ, or rather God in Christ, He is precious, Christ is precious, and God in and through Christ is precious. But where is the precious thought? Who are restless without God? To whom are Goods not good without God, Peace not rest without God, Life not a being without God, all nothing without God? Give me children, or else I dye, said Rachel. Dost thou say, Lord, give me thy self, or else I dye? O that this may be your sin no more! Yet consider, and be wise: O! Do not

Lam. 3. 24.
Partio cuiusq;
dicitur in quo
felicitatem su-
am quisq; collo-
cat. Calv.

Pla. 81. 11.

O. Sedg. &c.
p. 301, 302.

still stand out against him; Though you refuse his Ministers, yet do not any more refuse their Master: Though you like not the messengers, yet do not any more dislike the offers. What shall I say, to persuade you; or rather, whereby God himself may persuade you? If you will continue still resolute, that God shall not be a God to, and over you; verily, God will resolve, that you shall not be a people, but he will make an utter end of you: yet in the midst of judgement, he remembers so much mercy, as once more to offer himself unto you, notwithstanding all your former refusals of him; and if now you will but accept of him, all that is past shall be forgiven you, and God will receive you into his grace and favour, and never any more upbraid you with your often refusals of him: Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins (your refusals of God in Christ, of such sins the Apostle speaks in that place) may be blotted out: But if you will not, how can you read without trembling, that Word of the Lord, *If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries?*

Against closing with God hypocritically.

Baxter's Apology, p. 62, 63.

2. Closing with God hypocritically. Beware lest your willingness to have God for your God, still prove a consent not suited to the object of Faith, in its absolute necessary respect and nature. "It is essential to God, as the object of mans Faith, (saith a Worthy) to be his supreme Lord and Rector; and his ultimate end, and chiefest good: and so must be apprehended and willed by all, that indeed take him for their God: As also to be perfect in Being, Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, and of perfect Veracity: yea, it is essential to the object of our Faith, as such, to be considered comparatively: As that God be taken, not only as our Good, but our chief good, to be prefer'd before every creature: that he be taken, not only as our Lord, but as Sovereign Lord, to be obeyed before all other. — Where these essentials are not in the apprehension of the object, there is not truly Consent, or Faith. — Consent hath relation to the Offer: and if it be not the offered thing, that is consented to, but somewhat else, under that name, then it is not indeed Consent, for there is no Relate without its Correlate. — The Civil Law saith, *Ignorantis non est consensus*; A God that

“is inferiour to Creatures in Rule, or Goodness, and De-
“fireableness, is not God indeed: And therefore, he that
“takes God in this sense for his God, takes but the Name of
“God, an Idol of his own brain, and not God himself:
Hath not this been your sin? Is it not still your sin? Do not
you seem to consent, when you do not indeed and in truth con-
sent? You pretend, you are heartily willing, that God should
be your God, and that you do consent to have him. But?

First, *Are not you still ignorant of the true God, whom you say* Ignorantly,
you consent to take for your God? Ignorant Professours can only
seem to be Consenters: And are not you still ignorant Pro-
fessours? See Chap. 1.

Secondly, *Are not you for having of God, without rejecting of* Without re-
other gods? Indeed, had our hearts been alwayes chaste and jecting other
faithful, we should not have needed to break, we should only Gods.

have tyed a knot; but because of our former wanton dalliance Teates Scrip-
with, and engagements unto other lovers, we must solemnly ture-Map of
renounce and disclaim them, or God will not be ours. Hearken the wilder-
O Daughter, and consider, forget also thine own people, and thy nesses of sin, and
fathers house: so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty. But, Do way to Cana-
not you still refuse to renounce the World for your chief good? an, P. 338:

Do not you still say in your hearts and desires, *Who will show us,* Psa: 45. 10, 11.
who will give us to enjoy, any good, the good of the creature, Other chief
an earthly happiness? Do not you still say in your hearts, *Take* goods.
God for a portion, who will, so we may have our portion in this Psa. 4. 6.

life? Was not he guilty of blasphemy, that said, He would
not part with his part in *Paris*, for a part in *Paradise*? And
are not your hearts guilty of the same? Do not you still place
your happiness, either in riches, or honours, or pleasures? Do
not some cry out, *Let us enjoy our pleasures, and we matter not* Hac tria pro
God and Heaven; yea, we matter not wealth or honour? trino numine
Do not others cry out, *Let us get riches, and we matter not grace and* mundum habet.
glory; yea, we matter not honour or pleasure? Populus mihi
Do not your earnest desires of having, carking cares, and anxious endeavours for the sibilis, & mihi
procuring, inordinate delight in the enjoyment, distrustful fears of plauds.
losing, and repining sorrows for parting with, this Worlds good
things, speak out plainly, that you still place your happiness in
the creature? Do not you still refuse to renounce all other Lords?

Are not some still resolved to be ruled by the Devil, to be what
he would have them be, and to do what he would have them
do?

Eph. 2. 3:
Arguments

do? Are none of you Children of disobedience? The original word imports, *Children unperswadable*. Are not some still unperswadable by any Arguments to reject Satans injections and counsels? Are not others still resolved to be ruled by the *world*, the *things* of the World, the *men* of the World? The World shall cut out their work, and choose their *employments*, yea their very Religion, and set limits to it: Mens opinions, precepts, practices shall be their rule and standard. Are not others still resolved to be ruled by themselves! to continue their own Lords, consulting only with flesh and blood, doing only what is good in their own eyes, as that People, who cryed out, *We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth of our own mouth; for then we had plenty of victual, and were well, and saw no evil: but since we left off, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword.* But what saith Christ? *No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: Yee cannot serve God and mammon.* Verily, you cannot be ruled by the flesh, or the World, or the Devil, and by God too.

Jer. 44. 17, 18.

Mat. 6. 24

Without yielding up self unto God.

Hos. 2. 7.

Teare, &c.
p. 339.

Psal. 119. 94.

Roberts of the Covenant.
fol. 94, 95.

Thirdly, *Are not you still for having God to be yours, without an hearty willingness to be the Lords?* Verily you will finde it, that it is not enough to think or say, *I am none of Satans, I am not for the World, I will not be for the Flesh*: thou must come to say heartily, *I am Gods*; I am, and through grace will continue Gods, and none but Gods. We must not only leave our former lovers, but we must return to our first husband. What is this (saith one) but the marriage-match, and in the truest sense, the true-lovers-knot? But alas! can each of us say, *I am thine, save me?* I am not mine own, not the Worlds, not Satans; but thine, thine really, thine totally, thine solely, thine everlastingly; save me: Are not you still unwilling that all you are, all that you have, all that you can do, and all that you can endure, should be the Lords? Are not you still unwilling that your minds should be his to apprehend and believe him? Your consciences his, to accuse, or excuse you according to his pleasure? your memories his to retain him? your wills his to yield and submit to him? your hearts and affections his to be employed about him and his concernments? your eyes his to behold his works? your ears his to hear his word? All your senses his, to be easements and inlets to his goodness? your members his to be weapons of righteousness? your being his to be

be only for him? Are not you still unwilling that all your credit, pleasures, riches, time, parts, gifts, privileges, relations, &c. Should be Homages unto God? Are not you still unwilling that all you can do should be either for publishing, and maintaining his truth, or promoting his worship, or protecting his Church, or advancing his Kingdom, or fulfilling his will? Are not you still unwilling to bear Christs reproach, to undergo tryals of cruel mockings, and scourgings, bonds, and imprisonments; if need be to be stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, in Deserts and in Mountains, and in Dens, and in Caves of the Earth being destitute, afflicted, tormented for his sake? To resist even unto blood, fighting against sin? Is not this still the language of your hearts, Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us? Which of us doth yet yield himself unto the Lord? The genuine constitution of the Hebrew phrase is, Give yee the hand unto Jehovah. Are not you still unwilling to stretch out your hands to God, to be-take your selves to God in prayer? Are not you still unwilling to yield obediencial subjection to Gods government, as they submitted themselves (or gave the hand) unto Solomon the King? Are not you still unwilling to enter into Covenant with God to be his (which in Scripture is called giving the hand, and striking hands) according to the Directions in the late famous Vindication of Piety.

Heb. 13. 13, 36.
37:38

Hebr. 12: 4:

Psal: 2: 3.
Ash on

2 Chron. 30. 8.
Job 11: 13:
Isa: 1: 15:
1 Chro. 29. 14.
Ezek: 17: 18:
Prov. 22: 26:

Fourthly, Is not your willingness to have God forced, and not free? Properly indeed every consent is voluntary; but yet that may be called an involuntary consent, when the will, might it use its own liberty with safety, would not consent, though at present it doth. Such a consent doth a Marriner give to cast his goods over-board in a Storm. God wooes and wins hearts; he doth not ravish them. Indeed at first they are not only coy, but crooked: He comes to his own (in this sense, even his own intended, and elect Lady and Spouse) but she receives him not. What gracious heart is there, but with bitterness remembers how often it refused God, before he brought it to a yea, and Amen? God only of unwilling makes them willing in the day of his power. But alas! are not you still forced to be willing to have him, rather then to be damned? Did you ever look after God, but in a strait? Have not sin, and the World been your only delight in good days? and God your desire only in evil days? In your extremities God shall

Forcedly. and
not freely:

Teate, &c:
Page 337:

Psal: 110: 3: 1)

Ob: sedg: &c:
sinur: open:

GO pag: 303, 304:

go for a Number; but in your prosperity he shall stand only for a cipher. Verily involuntary consents are false, are none, are indeed real refusings.

Defectively
and not fully:
Teare, &c:
page 338:]

Ob: Sedg: &c:
pag: 302, 303:

Fifthly, Is not your willingness to have God defective, and not full? Right consenting is not only a free, but a full act of the will. A divided heart never yet consented indeed to have God for its God. Surely that Christ, that God in Christ, that will not allow one man to serve two masters, will never allow one woman to have two husbands, especially if himself must be one of them. But alas! though you may not place your happiness altogether in the creature, yet are not you still for placing some part of your happiness in some created good? Though you be not altogether for being ruled only by Satan, or the World, or the Flesh: yet are not you still unwilling not to be ruled in the least by any of those Lords? Are not you still unwilling to become fully the Lords? Is there not some one thing in your selves, in the World, that you stick for? God can prevail with you for all, but one thing, in that he must yield unto you. Is there not some one thing in God that you stick at? you like Gods mercy, and his love, and his graciousness, and his happiness: but is there not some one thing in God that you like not? Do not you mistake either his holiness, or his justice, or his anger, and wrath against sin? Are you sure that you like his Rule, and Authority, his Spirit, his All? Alas! in this, or in that, you cannot like him, you cannot come up to him: you are content to part with this, and to leave that; to do this, and to suffer that; but you cannot yield up all unto God: you will part with some sins, yea with all but one: you will forsake much of the World, but not all. Is not your consent accompanied with some one exception or other? you will have God, that with him you may enjoy such a lust, or so that with him you may have such a kind of life: so that for him you may not hazard your name, and credit, or your liberty, or livelihood, or your very life. If it be thus, verily you do but pretend to consent: your seeming consent is a real dissent. This one difference between God and your souls, will keep the breach between you from being made up, and condemn you for Refusers of him. No bargain, no match, can be made where there is one exception.

For the future,
and not for the
present:

Sixthly, Are not you only willing to have God for the future, and not for the present? Do not you delay to close with God, as your chiefest

chiefest good, and supremest Lord? Do not you pause on Gods offers, and put him off for the present? Hath not God your present denial, but the *Flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil*, your present Embracements? You take the present time to please the *Flesh*, to enjoy the *World*, to gratify the *Devil*; but you do not take the present time to enjoy God. O Sinner! what is it that thy Heart doth at present choose and cleave unto? Is it not something sinful, or worldly? Do not some of you see a more present good in your Lusts, than in God? Do not others see a more present good in the World, than in God? Are not you still guilty of trifling delays? Do not you say to God as *Felix* to Paul, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee*? A consent for the future is no other than a present dissent. It is indeed a most contemptible refusing of God, when we do not judge his offers even of himself to be our chief good, and supremest Lord, worthy of acceptance; of all acceptance, of all acceptance for the present.

O. Sedg. &c.
pag. 281.

Acts 24. 25.

Seventhly, *Is not your willingness to have God temporary, and weak, and not habitual, and prevailing?* It is not (saith one) what thou art in a fit, or in a fright, or in a sudden passion, in sickness, or under the apprehensions of death, that will give thee any certain Light, by which thou maist judge of thy state, but what thou art in the standing and abiding disposition and bent of thy Soul. He, that hath indeed consented to have God for his God, abides willing, is never unwilling (when he is himself) to be rid of Sin, the World, and the Devil, and to place his Happiness in the enjoyment of God, and being under his government: To be sure, his willingness abides greater than his unwillingness. But alas! Are not you only willing to have God in Fits and Moods? Do not you remain habitually unwilling? Is not your unwillingness greater than your willingness? Right willingness (saith the same Author) will discover it self to be prevailing by bringing forth both *Resolution & Resistance* against Sin: Where a man is truly willing to be rid of Sin, he will not only be patient, and give God leave to Crucifie all his beloved Lusts, and darling Corruptions, and give the Word leave to hew and strike home at the root of them, without hiding them, or warding off the blow, or wishing they may be spared to him; but stands stedfastly on Gods side, and taking part with him against, resolves to use

Temporarily
and weakly.
Allens Vindication of God-
liness. pag.
276, 277.

all his means for the conquering and overcoming of them : And this resolution will bring forth resistance, a restraining, curbing, and withstanding of Sin in all its Workings. But were you ever thus resolved against the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, and for God? Do you yet thus resist all Temptations to the contrary?

Renouncing
God.

3. *Renouncing of God.* Hath not this been your Sin? Even since you have consented that God should be your God, have not you cast him off? Have you not returned with the Dog to the Vomit, and with the Sow to wallow again in the Mire? Have not you returned to your Former Lovers, and to be again in subjection to those other Lords, that have had absolute dominion over you? If you have not rejected God directly and intentionally, yet have not you rejected him consequently and implicitly? Thus Saul, in sparing Agag, and the fat Beasts of the Amalekites, against Gods express commandment, is said to have Rejected Gods Word, & therefore God himself. *Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being King.* Have not you with deliberation, for the gaining of somewhat that pleased you, done that which is indeed casting off of God? Which of you can say, *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way, though thou hast sore broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the shadow of Death? Oh! if we have forgotten the Name of the Lord, or stretcht out our hands to a strange God, shall not God search out this? Have not you lifted up your heel against God, after you have lifted up your hand unto God? Hath not God threatned to renounce you, because you have renounced him? to deny you, because you have denied him? O! be at length perswaded to remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your first-works; and for the future, with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord: i. e. (as one well observes) as you have made a good choice, so still to stick to your choice. Never more refuse God, as the Stomach is said to refuse such meat, as, because of its contrariety to its appetite, it vomits up again.*

Howard's Souls
misery and
recovery, &c.
page 134.

1 Sam. 15. 23.

Psal. 44. 18, 19,
20, 21.

2 Tim. 2. 12.

Rev. 2. 5.

Acts 11. 23.

Antiphar-
macum Saluber-
rimum. p. 6.

Now that you may not only heartily mourn for, but carefully take heed of, even virtual, as well as formal refusals of Gods offers of himself unto you to be your God, consider seriously what provocations all kinds of refusals of God are unto his Majesty? Must it not necessarily incense him, that you should (as it were) tell him you will have none of his Mercy, none of his Love, none of Himself; you had rather enjoy the World, yea, your

your lusts, which dishonour and grieve him so much? Hath not God said, *Wherefore* (speaking of this very sin) *my fury hath been poured forth, and kindled in the Cities of Judah, and in the Streets of Jerusalem, and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day?* Yea, may you not fear, that God will let you fall in this hour of temptation; yea, give you up unto your own hearts lusts, to commit all manner of wickedness? *Israel would have none of me: so I gave them up unto their own hearts lust, and they walked in their own counsels.*

Chap. IV. *The Miscarriages opposite to Trusting in God, the relying Act of Faith.*

1. **T**empting of God. Tempting is the same with trying: to tempt God, is to make tryal of some Divine perfection unlawfully. There is indeed a lawful making an experiment of God; *Try me now in this, saith the Lord of Hosts.* This tempting or trying, is an Act of Faith, leading us to obey and practise those things, which God hath commanded, with expectation of that fruit and blessing, that God hath promised: But there is an unlawful making experiments of God. And hath not this been, yea is not this still your sin? Is not your *proving God*, an evidence of your *tempting God*? *Your Fathers tempted me, and proved me.* Do not you still make unlawful experiments of Gods power, whether he can do such and such things? *They tempted God in their heart — they said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* Do not you still circumscribe Gods power, and set bounds to it at your pleasure; so that if God do not this or that, which you have a mind to, he shall not be accounted Omnipotent? *They — tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.* Do not you still do such and such things, in the most secret manner possible, to try whether God seeth what is done in secret, or no? *They tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or no?* Do not you still refuse to make use of the ordinary means God hath appointed, trying whether he will provide for you extraordinarily? This Christ calls *Tempting the Lord.* Do not you still murmur and repine against God, and his Instruments, trying whether he will be angry? *Tempting Christ, and murmuring, are made Synonims.* If you do not still tempt God directly and intentionally, yet do not you —

Against Tempting God.
Amesij medull.
l. 1. c. 12.
Mal. 3. 10.

Pla: 95: 9.
Pla. 78. 18, 19:
Pla. 78. 41.
Exod. 17. 7.

1 Cor. 10. 9, 10.

still tempt him consequently and implicitly? Do not you still do that, which of it self, and in its own nature, tends to try, either Gods Power, or his Omniscience, and Omnipresence, or his Providence, or his Justice and Anger, of what mettal he is made? This notion of tempting God, may be farther cleared by considering, what it is to tempt man: *To tempt man, is to desire, and some way to endeavour, to incline him to break that Law, that ought to rule him: In like manner, To tempt God, is to desire, and some way to endeavour, to incline him to break that Law, which he hath proposed to himself to follow, in the ruling of the World.* Hence some distribute temptations into two sorts, some of inducement, and some of tryal; but the former sort may be referr'd to the latter, because the will of God is tryed in them. Thus God is tempted two wayes especially, either by expecting that God should do what he hath not promised, or by expecting that he should not do what he hath threatned. And do not you thus still tempt God? Do not you still expose your selves to danger, without any urgent necessity, expecting protection from Heaven? Do not you still do what Christ was tempted to by Satan? Do not you still refuse to use the ordinary means appointed by God for your safety, and yet expect that God should even work miracles for your preservation? It is true, when God takes away means of safety from us, then to expect safety immediately from Heaven, is not to tempt God, but to trust in God; for God hath promised to come in at a dead life: When God affords no means of safety, he will provide for our safety without means, if it be good for us to be safe. And Abraham called the name of the place, *Jehovah-jireh*, as it is said to this day, in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen: The English of which Text (saith one) is this, *Mans extremity is Gods opportunity.* When Christ, and his company, were in the desert, where no meat was to be had, he fed them miraculously; but in the City, he sent his Disciples to buy meat. We may expect Water out of the Rock, where there is nothing but Rocks and Stones; but where we may hope to find Water, we must digg for it. When *Elisha* was in a little Village, not able to defend him from the *Affyrians*, he had chariots and horsemen of fire to defend him; but when he was in *Samaria*, a strong walled City, though the King of Israel sent to fetch his head, he said only to those that were with him, *Shut the door.* Do not some

White on Mat.
4.7.

Gen. 22. 14.

Ashs Support
for the sinking
heart, in
times of di-
stress, pag. 3.
John 4. 8.
Numb. 20. 11.

2 Kings 6.
17. 32.

some still expect, that God should provide for their Bodies, though they neglect the means that God hath appointed for their nourishment, clothing, recovery from sickness, &c. *Do not some look to eat, although they do not labour?* But do not more expect that God should provide for their Souls, though they neglect the means of grace and salvation? Do not you still think, that your Souls shall do well enough, though you take no pains about them? Do not you lay all upon God, and never trouble your selves about them? Do not you still cry out, *Let us dye the death of the righteous?* But are not you careless of living the life of the righteous? Do not you still expect help from God in sinful wayes? Do not you still expect to meet with God in wayes of worship of your own devising? Now therefore, *why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers, nor we, were able to bear?* In a word, (as to this Head) Do not you still do what tends to incline God to make good his promises, though you do not perform their conditions? Do not you also still expect, that God should not execute his threats upon you, though there be that in you, against which, where it is, the threatnings are denounced? Do not you still expect to escape punishments, notwithstanding your very sins are threatened by God in his Word? Do not you still run into temptation? And are not you careless to avoid occasions of sin, and yet remain fearless of falling into sin, though God hath threatened, *to give up such to their own hearts lusts?* O that this may be your sin no more! 4, 5. O! tempt not Christ any more, as you have tempted him. The naturalness of this sin should make you take heed. This is an humour, that we are all given unto by nature, to be marvellous desirous to try conclusions, that are rare and unknown; to concern things common, and to be fond after strange novelties. It was told the Israelites, as plain as could be, that they should not reserve of the Manna till morning, and they needed not to have reserved it, they had fresh every day; and yet forsooth, they would needs keep it, if it were but for an experiment sake, *to try whether it would sink, or no:* And though they were forbidden to gather any on the Sabbath day, and on the Eeven before had enough for two dayes, and it was told them, they should find none on the Sabbath day; yet they must needs try. This sin should not only be the more lamented, but the

2 Thes. 3. 10.

Acts 15. 10.

Ezek. 14. 3.

4, 5.

1 Cor. 10. 9.

Exod. 16. 20.

more taken heed of, because it is such a provocation unto God. It comes from much wickedness. Such an one, that will undertake a new way to know the will of God, is not satisfied with Gods discovery of his will in his Word: yea this sin proceedeth from pride and arrogancy, such a soul refuseth to subject its will to the will of God, and dorth seek to make Gods will subject to its lusts. This sin lays you open to all manner of temptations, to any wickedness whatsoever: neither are we overcome by any temptation of the Devil, unless we do in a sort tempe God. *The Lord Jesus sighed for the Pharisees tempting of God, and why? Because God sware in his wrath, that their Fathers who tempted him, should not enter into his rest.* It is verily height of madness to tempt God. To tempt God is to put God to it, and do yee provoke the Lord to anger; are yee stronger than he? If you will needs tempe, it were best for you to tempe your matches. There is no dealing with Fire: it is very dangerous to make experiments thereof: it will burn all, that toucheth it, and God is Fire, yea our God is a consuming Fire.

2 Not trusting in God. The Hebrews expresse this act of faith by a word, that signifieth to lean on, or to cast the weight of ones body, for support or stay. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more stay upon him, that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the holy one of Israel in truth.* But which of our souls do yet wholly rely upon God for the making good of his promises, either for the bestowing, or continuing, of what is good, or for the preventing, or removing, of what is evil? Is not our not trusting in God still evidenced in our ignorance of God? can God be more trusted than he is known? *They that know thy name, and they only, will put their trust in thee.* Is it not also evidenced in our want of interest in God, by reason of our not assenting, and consenting to him? *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?* who can suppose God to be thy leaning-stock, if he be not thy beloved? May not God say with a bitter scorn, *who art thou, that leaneest upon anothers beloved?* How darest thou say *thine head in his bosome*, unto whom thou never yet gavest *the heart in thy bosome*? It is interest, and only interest in Christ, (in God in, and through Christ) that gives a right to this act of leaning upon him: if you still refuse to enter into Covenant with God, he is so far from calling you to take

mar: 8: 11, 12:

Psal 95: 11:

1 Cor: 10: 22:

Heb: 12: 29:

Against not trusting in God:

Ila: 10: 20:

Psal: 9: 10:

Cant: 8: 5:

Teate, &c:

Page 333, 334:

take hold, that he will even knock off your fingers from holding upon his Covenant, with what hast thou to do, to take my Covenant into thy mouth? If God be thine, if thou believest him, and consents to have him to be thy God, *lean* and welcome, and the more thou leaneest, the dearer shalt thou be unto him, *Christ loved that Disciple best, that leaned upon his bosome most.* If thou canst say with Christ, my God, thou mayst add, he shall be my strength: If thou canst say with David, the Lord is my God, thou mayst add, my strength, in whom I will trust. But if God be not thy beloved, thy leaning will be counted wantonness, impudence, and presumption. Is not our not trusting in God also evidenced in our not keeping his way, the way of his Commandments, and the way of his Providence, but tempting of him? But of these evidences already in the former Chapters, and the first section of this. Once more, what else do your carking cares and carnal fears argue, but your distrusts of God? Trusting in God will not indeed suffer you to be slothfully careless what becomes of you and yours, *be that doth not endeavour by honest, prudent, diligent care to provide for his own is worse than an Infidel:* But yet trusting in God would not suffer you to be carkingly carefull for any thing: Be careful for nothing: it would free you from all those cares that distract the head, and divide the heart from other, and better things: yea it would free you from all carnal fears of evil, though you walk in the valley of the shadow of death, that is, though you meet with dangers as terrible as death, though those dangers beset you as the Mountains do the Valleys, though you be as near to death as the shadow is unto the body, though there be but a step between you and death. But alas! do not your carking cares and carnal fears either divert you from duty, as if it were a vain thing to serve and wait upon the Lord, or else distract you in duties, in reading, hearing, praying, meditating, &c. O that this may be your sin no more! Verily if God shall never be trusted in by you, you shall certainly, and for ought you know suddenly, be consumed by him. What said the Bramble when chosen King? Come, and put your trust in my shadow, and if not, let fire come out of the Bramble, and devour the Cedars of Lebanon. No wonder that Fire is proceeded from God to devour the tallest Cedars for their not trusting in him. You should take the more heed of this sin, because of your proneness to it, and because of its being the life and vigour of every sin: all sin is departing

Psal. 50. 101

John 21. 20.

Isa. 49. 5.

Psal. 18. 2.

Psal. 37. 3.

1 Tim. 5. 8.

Phil. 4. 6.

Ob. Sedg. on

Psal. 23. 3.

Psal. 112. 7, 8.

Mal. 3. 14.

Judg. 9. 15.

ing from God; and we depart from God only, because we do not trust in him.

Against tru-
sting in any
Creature.

Luk. 18. 9.

psal. 52. 7.

Isa. 30. 12.

Jer. 8. 5.

Lye on

psal. 62. 8.

in Mat. E. at C.

P. 433. 439.

Prov. 3. 5.

Isa 47. 10.

1 Cor 3. 19.

Rom. 8. 7.

prov. 28. 26.

Jer. 17. 9.

phil 3. 8, 9.

Engl. Annot.

on Is. 57. 10.

Nahum 3. 12:

prov: 18. 11:

Creature confidence: trusting in somewhat that is not God. Is not this still your iniquity? Do not you still trust in somewhat, either within or without your selves! Do not some still trust in their sins? Loe, this is the Man, that made not God his trust, but strengthened himself in his wickedness, you trust in oppression, and perverseness, and stay thereon. Do not you still lay as fast hold of your sins, as a lame Man of his Crutches? Do not you hold fast deceit, and refuse to return? Do not you think that if your sins fall, you shall fall? Do not you think that you cannot live, if you should leave your lying, dissembling, cheating, flattering, sinfull compliances with such, and such? Do not you still lean to your own understandings? If you do, you cannot trust in the Lord with all your hearts: your own wisdom, your own politicke contrivances for your safety, will pervert you: your wisdom will appear foolishness with God, yea enmity against God. Do not you still trust in your own hearts, in your own purposes, and resolutions, against your sins, and for God, and in your promises of what you will do hereafter? He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool; but he, that walketh wisely, shall be delivered. Alas! the heart of man is deceitfull above all things. Do not you still trust in your own righteousness? There is no more safety therein to secure you from the wrath of God in his Judgments in this World, than there is to secure you from the wrath of God in Hell. This Paul knew, and therefore he suffered the loss of all things, and stil counted them dung, that he might be found in Christ (as his only City of refuge) not having his own righteousness. Do not you stil trust in the strength, vigour, and health of your bodies? May it not still be laid to thy charge, that thou dost finde the life of thy hand, i. e. Thou still imaginest, that so long as thou art so strong and healthy, thou shalt not want sufficient means to support thee? Do not you stil trust in your Cities, Castles, strong holds? and yet doth not God tell you, all thy strong holds shall be like Fig trees, with the first ripe Figs: if they be shaken, they shall fall into the mouth of the eater? Do not you still trust in your wealth? It is so hard to have riches, and not trust in them, that what one Evangelist calls having of riches, another calls trusting in them. The rich Mans wealth is his strong City, and as an high wall in his conceit, i. e. He conceiveth himself as safe in the midst of his wealth, as if he were in a Tower

as high as Heaven, he thinks himself past the reach of danger ; but he is deceived : *Riches avail not in the day of wrath.* It is true, at sometimes and in some cases money is a defence or shadow ; but in the day of Gods wrath, money is but a shadow, and no defence. *Trust not therefore any more in uncertain riches.* He not once more guilty of this kind of Idolatry. Do not some still trust in their worldly greatness ? O ! woe to him, that coveteth an evil coverousness to his house, that he may set his Nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Do not others still trust in their humane Allies and Assistances ? That they have such Friends and Confederates, so many stout and valiant Men, ready to form Armies, to stand by them ? If the shadow of such be your trust, the end of that trust will be your confusion. *An Horse is a vain thing for safety.* And the stoutest Souldiers are but like an Army of Women without God. Do not others trust in Church priviledges, crying out the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are we ? Such trust but in lying words. No wonder that you have God for your foe, and that you are under his curse. What saith the Prophet ? yea what saith the Lord by the Prophet ? *Cursed be the Man, that trusteth in Man, and maketh flesh his Arme.* No wonder that God is writing sentences of death upon all the means of your salvation : God doth sometimes severely chastise his own Children, even to prevent their trusting in themselves. O ! how carefully should you take heed of this sin, seeing it is such a provocation unto God, it being an undeifying of God, and a deifying of some Creature : seeing also it is a sin that may be often committed in a day, yea in an hour : and seeing it is a sin that you are very prone unto ? It is very much in the nature of Man fallen (as one well observe) to affect an absoluteness, and a self-sufficiency, to seek the good he desireth within himself, and to derive from himself, the strength whereby he would repel any evil which he feareth. Hereby Satan prevailed to draw Man from God at first ; for since, next unto God, every reasonable created Being is nearest unto its self, we cannot conceive how it should turn from God, and not in the next step turn unto it self, and by consequence, whatsoever it was in a regular dependance to have derived from God, being fallen from him, it doth by an irregular dependance seek from it self. It is natural for a sinful Creature, who seeketh only himself, and maketh him-

Prov. 11. 4.
Ecc. 7. 12.
Zeph. 1. 18.
1 Tim. 6. 17.
Col. 3. 5.

Hab. 2. 9.

Isa. 30. 2, 3.
psal 33. 17.
Nahum 3. 13.

Jer. 7. 4.

Jer. 17. 5.

2 Cor. 1. 9.

Reynold on
Hos. 14. 3:
Joh. 803, 804,
805:

Hos. 5. 13.

self the last end; to seek only unto himself, and make himself the first cause and mover towards that end: Yea, so desperate is the aversion of sinful man from God, that when he is convinced of his impotency, and driven off from self-dependance; yet when he hath no horses of his own to ride on, yet still he will be take himself unto creatures like himself: If Ephraim see his sickness, and Judah his wound; Ephraim will to the Assyrian, and King Jareb for help. Yea, when he hath nothing in the world to turn to, but he is necessitated to implore help from God, he will invent wayes of his own to do it. If Horses fail, and Asses fail, and Israel must goe to God whether he will or no, it shall not be to God that made him, but to a God of his own making. Once more, consider, you never repent for or from any sin, unless you repent for and from this sin. True Repentance and Conversion takes off the heart from all carnal Confidence; either in Domestical preparations of our own, *We will not ride upon Horses*; or in Foreign aid from any Confederates, *Asses shall not save us*: Or in any superstitious and corrupt worship, which sends us to God the wrong way, *We will not say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods*.

Hos. 14. 3.

Against Hypocritical trusting in God.

Job 8. 14.

4. Vain Confidence. Vain, not only in regard of the object, trusting in somewhat beside God; but vain in respect of its form, seeing, though it hath (in some sense) God for its object, yet it wants the essential properties of right trusting in God: I mean, the trust of the Hypocrite, which in Job is compared to the Spiders web. It's Mr. Caril's note upon the words, *That an Hypocrite hath a trust like himself*: He hath grace proper to his state; false grace for his false heart. And hath not your trusting in God been such as belongeth only to Hypocrites? Is yet your trusting in God fixed and resolved? Is there yet any strength in it? Trust, (saith the same excellent Expofitor) where it is true, hath a double effect, the want of which, discovers the falseness of it in the Hypocrite: It *confirms and strengthens the heart against all opposition*: And it *encourageth the heart against all dangers*. Doth not our trust fail in both these? Are not we still for going on boldly, till we meet with opposition, and dangers threaten us? Will our trust, though curiously wrought, bear any force of battery, or stress of weather, any more than a Spiders web? Are not we still guilty of not trusting in God at all times, and for all things? As true Obedience respects all the Command-

Caril on
Job 13. 15.

Commandements, so true Trust respects all the Dispensations of God. A true believer (saith one) depends as much in proportion upon God for a piece of bread, as for Heaven: He trusts God in the least, as well as in the greatest matters. But though we pretend to trust in God for pardon and glory; yet do not we think it needless to trust in him for food and rayment; either supposing that we can help our selves, or suspecting that God will not stoop so low, as to help us? When we have a great business to set about, we stir up our selves to trust in God: and so we ought; but the spiritualness of trust is seen, in depending on God, for managing the least business, performing the least duty, resisting the least corruption, and bearing the least burden. As it is the same love of God, that saveth us eternally, and preserveth us temporally: so it is the same power of God, that doth great and small things for us. Can we yet trust in God in all weathers? Some only trust in God in fair weather, when they are full, they can trust in God for bread; and when they are safe, they can trust in God for protection: And others only trust in him in foul weather; their trusting in God is not of choice, but forced, and of necessity; they never trust in him, but when they have nothing else to help them. Are we yet able to say, *Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him*: Or, *though he make me alive, I will trust in him*? "It is a glorious tryal of trust (saith the same Worthy) to say, Should God make me not worth a groat, yet I will trust him; but it is a greater glory of this trust, to say, *Though God make me worth thousands, yet I will trust in him*: When we (to sense) have the least need of Gods help, then to trust in him, and depend upon him, shews, that we are most sensible that we need his help; for by this, we in one act, give testimony to the All-sufficiency of God, and to the emptiness of the creature: by this we make God all, and the creature nothing at all. Faith gives a more spiritual discovery of it self, when it convinceth us, that we are poor, in the midst of our abundance, without God; than when it convinceth us, that we have abundance in God, though we are poor. Verily, to trust in God in all estates and turns, is proper to godliness. Our trusting in creatures so much, doth also evidence, that we do but seem to trust in God, and that in deed and in truth; we do not trust in him at all: He that trusts not in God alone, doth not trust in him

Job 8. 14.
Ila. 14. 23.

Ila. 33. 14:

at all. Every thing we joyn with God, *disjoyne*th us from God; We can never take hold of God, unless we let goe our hold of other things. Which of us leans upon *whole* God only, and that with the *whole* Soul? Well, seeing your trust hath been *the trust* of the Hypocrite, it is no wonder that it hath been *as a Spiders web*: No wonder that Gods besome of purgation to true believers, hath been his besome of destruction unto your Trust and Confidence. When the house is swept, the cobwebs are swept away: No wonder that such *singers* as you, in *Zion* be afraid: No wonder that *fearfulness* surprizeth the Hypocrite. O! as ever you would stand before devouring Fire, take heed that your trust be not as the Spiders web.

Chap. V. *The Miscarriages opposite to Assurance, the reflex Act of Faith.*

Against want
of Assurance.

1. **R**egardlesness of getting Assurance: which is called by some Divines, *Sensus Fidei*, the feeling, or perceiving of Faith: by others, *Flos Fidei*, the very lustre, and eminency of Faith. When God requires all the Acts of Faith, he doth not only require, that we *know* him, and *believe* him, and *consent* to have him, and *relye* upon him; but he requires, that we *know* that we do so. It is true, Assurance is not such a duty, as concerns *all men*, at *all times*, and *immediately*; it concerns only *some*, and those in an *order*, and *mediately*: Though therefore it is not the sin of *Unbelievers*, not to know that God is their God, for that cannot be known by them; such are not bound immediately to be perswaded of an interest in God, unless we will say, that they are bound to be perswaded of a lye; God being the God of Believers only; yet it is the sin of Believers, to let their interest in God to hang hovering, and in dispute. It must be confessed, that Gods not evidencing the direct Acts of Faith unto Believers, is not their sin; for God may refuse to evidence them, out of Sovereignty, or for the *meer tryal* and exercise of grace, and not for the Believers sins; but yet, for a Believer to be regardless of getting Assurance, is his sin; yea, if God refuse, for any long time, to evidence the direct Acts of Faith, he may thank some sin or other. He that bids us, *Work out your salvation*, and make your calling and election sure, would not

Hickman's
discourse con-
cerning the
spirits sealing
up believers.
page 76, 77.

so let us be at uncertainties concerning our selves, did not we
 slight some Ordinance, or omit some Duty, or give way to
 some Lust. And is not this your sin still? Do not you still want
 that feeling or perceiving of Faith, which is not merely hot
 maney and subject to falshood and delusions, but from Gods
 Spirit, perswading the Soul, that it doth know, believe, con-
 sent to, and trust in God, and therefore infallible; for the Spi-
 rit can no more inwardly perswade a Soul of, then he can exter-
 nally bear witness to, any thing that is false? It is a good rule,
 laid down by a late worthy in our Israel, *That in all the Acts of*
Faith, whether they be direct, or reflect, the firmness and certainty
doth more depend upon Gods Spirit, confirming us, then upon the
clearness of the Arguments. But which of us can say, that we
 know infallibly we are believers from Gods Spirit perswading
 us of the truth of our faith? It is true, no Man hath such per-
 fection of degrees of assurance in an ordinary way, as that one
 degree more cannot be added to the former: and yet (as one
 well reasoneth) there is not any repugnancy in asserting an in-
 fallible assurance, and denying a perfect assurance; for I infallibly
 know that there is a God, and that this Gods good and just,
 and yet I have not a perfect knowledge of a Deity, or of his
 goodness and justice; for in this life we know but in part: Is
 not your want of assurance that God is your God evidenced still
 in your "Not being yet above the tormenting fear of death:
 "not yet despising the perishing vanities of this World: not
 "yet slighting the censures of the ungodly: remaining still
 "without an holy boldness in prayer: not yet taking comfort
 "in Word and Sacraments: not yet abounding in praise and
 "thanksgiving: not yet kindly mourning for your sins, nor
 "watching against them: and not yet disregarding cavils a-
 "gainst the Truth? Is not God contending with you upon
 this account? God hath often called upon you in the Ministry
 of the Word, to give all diligence to make sure that you are
 believers, and that God is your God upon your faith in him;
 but though God hath spoken in your prosperity, you have not heard:
 And is not he using his Rod to make way for his Word to enter
 into your hearts? Is not he depriving you of all your outward
 delights, *Causing all your desirable things to perish at his rebuke,*
 that they may not hinder you any longer from making sure,
 what cannot be taken away from you, that your hearts may not

Burges's Refi-
 nings, &c.
 Part 1. fol. 20,
 21.

Doddridge, in
 Morning Ex-
 ercise at Crip-
 gate, serm. 12.
 P. 306, 307.

Hickman ut
 supra: p. 135.
 to page 155.

Jer. 22: 21.

be taken up any longer with other enjoyments, and thereupon want either *time or will* to pursue *the one thing necessary*? Are not the Childs Babies taken away to make it learn its Lesson? Hath not God made a *Thorn* to grow up with every *Flower*; the *Star Wormwood* to fall into every estate you are in, that you may yet at length say, it is not good to be so busie to secure these bitter-sweets, and careless of securing an interest in the *unmixed* chief good? Is not God bringing you into life-threatening dangers, that you might not only hear with the hearing of the ear, but see with your eyes the necessity of having your interest in God cleared up unto your souls?

Against care-
lesnes to keep
Assurance.

Non minor est
virtus, quam
quiescere, par-
tueri.

Judg. 6. 13.
Hickman &c.
p. 183. to 193.
Deut. 26. 10.

Psal. 85. 8.
Eccl. 5. 4, 5, 6.

2 Carelesnes of preserving assurance, when gotten. It was your duty to be as careful to *keep*, as to *gain*, assurance. When you had gained assurance, you should have remembered that you took God to be your God; to rule you, and make you happy in the enjoyment of himself, not to make you rich and great in this World, and that therefore Gods people being in the hands of the *Midianites*, will not evidence that the Lord is not with them, though *Gideon* say, *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?* You should have remembered that sincere, not perfect, faith in God, interests souls in him, and that therefore frailties and infirmities do not dissolve the union: you should have been very thankfull for the *first fruits of the Heavenly Canaan*: you should have been very careful not to return unto folly; you should not have *deserted* to pay your vows unto God: yea you should have brought forth such fruit after assurance, as you either *did* not, or *could* not, before assurance. But have not you been careless of discharging your duty herein? Have not you forgotten the termes of the Covenant you have entred into with God? Have not you been unthankful even for an Heaven upon Earth? Have not you been guilty of wilful Relapses? Have not you refused or delayed to pay your vows? Have not you done as little for God, as you might have done, had the light of his countenance been never lifted up upon your souls? And is not God therefore angry with you? Is not he greatly displeased with you? That is his meaning, when he saith, *be hath no pleasure in such fools*. Hath not he taken away what you had? Hath not he deprived you not only of many visible tokens of his presence, but of the spiritual light of his countenance,

Mat. 13. 12.

nance, that you may more value, and be more chary of, assurance, if ever you enjoy it again? And what! shall God lose his end? O! If ever God vouchsafe you any more of the *hidden Manna*, take heed of wasting and crumbling it away: take heed of losing the *white stone* any more: O! maintain the *Oyle* of gladness in the *Cruze*: Be not any more willing to part with thy sweetness, thy fatness, and pleasantness: Be never more willing to be left to the courtesy of a *Wave*: O! never more be weary of the *Sun-shine*: take heed of being once more cloyed with the clusters of *Canaan*, and of nauseating the *Honey comb*.

Culverwell's
White stone,
page 152.

3. Remifsness in recovering Assurance, when lost. Hath not this been your miscarriage? and is not God therefore contending with you? Hath not God deprived you of sealing Ordinances, because you had before driven him from his own Ordinances, and were not restless for his return? Is it not the design of God in taking away from you *sealing Ordinances* to make you yet sensible of the loss of the *sealing Spirit*, and that you may give him no rest till he hath returned you both; that the *Winter* may be past, and the time of *singing* may return? Is it nothing to you to be under a *spiritual Famine*? Can you now live without the *hidden Manna*? Are you still willing to continue under such a dismal Cloud, yea to *ser* in it?

Against Re-
misfness in reco-
vering Assu-
rance.

O that none of the three foregoing miscarriages may be your *hins* any more!

First, Take heed therefore of thinking any more either that assurance is not attainable at all, or that it is not tenable, when attained; or that it is not recoverable, when lost. Apprehensions of impossibility in either will kill all endeavours, yea desires after it, because they will kill hope. Though the will sometimes, being inordinate, may be tickled with a desire of impossibilities, under an implicit condition, yet no hope, whether regular, or corrupt, can respect its object under that apprehension. It worketh two passions most repugnant to this Hatred and Despair; the one being a proud opposition, the other a dreadful flight from that good, in which the Mind perceiveth an impossibility of attaining it. Treasure up therefore the promises that God hath made, that Believers shall have, keep, recover assurance; not only that they shall know that God is their God, but they shall walk in his Light, and if at any time through their own default they lose the Light of his countenance, that upon their

Reynold's
VWorks. fol.
1001.

Ezek. 34. 30.
Hos. 2. 19. 23.

Repem-

Repentance he will heal their back-slidings, and love them freely, maintain himself as graciously as ever. Promises they are of things, as *future*; they are undertaking of good things, which shall come to pass: Now every further thing is a possible thing.

Secondly, *Take heed of slipping away from the want of Assurance.* Uncertainty, as to the truth of faith, and as to interest in God, is no light evil, it is even an insupportable burden, especially to those that have experienced what an Heaven upon Earth there is in Assurance. Though one may be a Believer, and not know that he is a Believer; and though Assurance after it is gained may be lost; yet verily you have cause to question whether your Faith in God be true, and whether ever you were Assured, if you can carry the want, or loss of Assurance, as if it were no burden, and do not follow after the gaining or recovering of Assurance with unutterable sighs and groans. Thou bidst thy faith (saith David) and I was troubled. It was indeed his daily sorrow of heart, yea it was as death unto him. He is true, some run into the other extreme: they are too much troubled for not gaining, or losing Assurance, looking on their case as desperate, and themselves as guilty of the unpardonable sin, in driving God away from them: but do you take heed of both extremes, not only lest you should be troubled too much, but lest you should be troubled too little.

Thirdly, *Take heed* (not only lest your complaints, but) *lest your requests for the procuring, or preserving, or recovering of Assurance be heartless.* Are you in tears whether you be believers, whether God be your God, especially in such days as these? you should be (as David was) *all prayer*: you should even envy your selves the time you are forced to spend in eating and drinking, and sleeping. Never expect to get Assurance as first without such *pantings*, as the chased Hart hath after the water-brooks, without earnest entreaties, and longings of Soul. Are you for the present under the light of Gods countenance? Deprecate heartily an Eclipse. Have you lost your assurance? Desire earnestly from God new stamps and impressions: tell him, though you have lost the *Print*, yet he hath not lost the *Seal*: give him no rest, till he give your soul's rest. Read but the Psalms of David, penned by him, when he was in desertion, you think that he breathed out his Soul with his *Petitions*. How earnest also was *Heman*? yea Jesus Christ's Agony made him

more

Psal: 30: 7.

42: 3, 4.

Psal: 30: 6, 7, 8.

77: 1, 2.

88: 1, 2, 9.

more to express his earnestness, than at other times. *Being in an Agony, he prayed more earnestly.* This is one end of Gods present dispensations towards you: *I will go (saith God) and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their afflictions they will seek me early:* i. e. betimes, with all speed, with care and vigour also, at such a rate as Men are wont to do things in the morning. *If your doubts do not prevail so far, as to make you leave off hearty praying, your hearty prayers will prevail so far, as to make you leave off doubting.*

Luke 22: 44:
Hos. 5: 15:
Hickman, &c.
Page 205:

Fourthly, *Take heed of contenting your selves* (not only with heartless, but) *with fruitless complaints.* Some (saith a famous Author) are of a whining temper, apt to fill the ears of all their familiars with sad relations of their mournful case; but there is little else to be found besides complaints: the soul humbleth not himself before God, nor contends in prayer, nor striveth by the Ordinances and holy walking to finde what it always was without, or hath lost. He compares them to the sick man, who lyeth grieving himself, but no way seeking in earnest to help himself; and to *Issachar*, crouching under his burthen. To spend time (saith another) in whining complaints, is more easie and more pleasing to those who have bruised themselves; but to stir up strength, and be doing, is more safe and pleasing to God. I would not (so he goes on) have deserted souls chidden for crying out and roaring: How can they do other, *whose wounds stink, and are corrupt, whose sores run all the night long?* But they must not spend all their time in roaring, but get the broken bones set, and make use of them; so shall they recover strength and rejoyce.

Symmonds de-
ferred Soul's
case and cure-
Page 486.

Hickman, &c.
page 200.

Fifthly, *Take heed of neglecting any longer any one means of Gods appointment, either for the getting, or keeping, or recovering of Assurance.* The neglect of any one (as one well observes) may provoke God to reject your attendances on him in the other: 'tis also uncertain in which God will manifest himself, and evidence to you the truth of your Faith in him. Sometimes he doth it in prayer: sometimes in the reading or hearing of the Word of God: sometimes in religion holy conference: sometimes in receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: sometimes in singing of Psalms.

Hickman, &c.
page 167. to
page 173.

Sixthly, *Take heed of remaining any longer laxie and slothful in the use of the means.* O! yet at length give diligence to make
your

2 Pet. 1. 104

Calverwell's your calling sure; i. e. your effectual calling, that your faith in
White Stone. God is a full answer thereunto. Assurance both *requires* and
page 150, &c. *deserves* all diligence. Such is the *darkness, deceitfulness, and*
157, &c. *inconstancy of the heart*: such is the *malice, policy, and diligence*
of Satan to improve it: of so much consequence is this *business,*
and so dangerous is it to be *deceived* herein, that all diligence is
little enough. So *satisfactory* also is this assurance, that no *labour*

Antipharmacum, &c.

page 41.

See many
 more patheti-
 cal considera-
 tions to hum-
 ble for laziness
 and to stir up
 to diligence
 herein in

Morn. Exer.

at Cripple-gate.

page 141.

315, 316.

*Isidem alitur
 quibus dignitur.*

will be *grudg'd* by those that do believe it. O! the rather now
 give all diligence to put your faith in God out of doubt, be-
 cause a Day of great trouble is approaching, yea already be-
 gun. What have you besides this to oppose to all your trou-
 bles here? When it comes to resisting to blood, and giving up
 all, can you fadge with such work, while your spirits are dubi-
 ous & cloudy in this point? O my friends! Believe it, 'tis nothing
 but this that can make a Saint triumph & glory in abasures &
 tribulations. And little do you imagine how insupportable trou-
 bles are, when the spirit is low and dubious in point of interest:

In particular, *Take heed of being lazie, or any other ways mis-*
carrying, in self-examination Assurance consists in a reflex Act,
 and by such workings it is gotten, maintained, and recovered.
 The main reason why some never *had* Assurance, why others
 do not *keep* assurance, and why others do not *recover* assurance;
 is, because they are not *often* enough, nor *diligent* enough in
reflecting upon the *drift, & course* of their *hearts & lives*: they do
 not *often* enough rightly & thoroughly compare themselves with
 the *sure marks* of true faith in God, laid down in the Word of
 God. Many will take some little pains to find out the marks
 of true faith in God, and some little time they will spend in
 comparing their hearts with those marks, but they will not con-
 tinue diligent in this great duty of self-examination, till the
 matter be brought to some issue; they will not behold their fa-
 ces in the Glass long enough to beget in themselves a true no-
 tion or Idea of themselves, but go away, and presently forget
 what manner of persons they were. But let it not be so with
 you any more. Do you make it your business to go through
 with this work, and therefore *take heed of being mistaken as to*
what faith in God, and what assurance of faith, is. Neither make
 more, nor fewer essentials of faith in God; neither more, nor
 less, necessary to interest in God, than God hath made. Ex-
 pect not ordinarily to have assurance of faith wrought, pre-
 served,

Hickman, &c.

page 120,

121, 122.

served, or recovered by some vocal, or as it were vocal, testimony of the spirit : or as soon as you be assured to be void of all fears, and filled with all joy in believing. *Set not about this work unseasonably*, but when you finde your hearts in the most serious and quiet frame. He that will see his Face in a Glass, must be fixed, and not in motion. *Be still*, and so *commune with your own hearts* ! When you are full of dark and black temptations, you are in a mist, and not able to see things aright. The muddied Water is not fit to give the true shape of the Face. *Hearken not to what carnal reason, and Satan say for, or against your interest in God.* Before faith in God, carnal reason and Satan use their utmost strength to perswade Souls of the goodness of their condition without Faith, thereby to prevent the entrance of Faith, and their seeking after it at all, as not needfull to interest them in God : After faith in God is wrought, and erected upon the ruines of all Satans strong holds, and the Souls carnal reasonings, Satan and carnal reason, in revenge of such an overthrow, muster up new Forces to perswade the Believer by all the Objections, they can raise, that it doth not believe aright, that its faith is not saving. *Take heed therefore of self-love, and sinful jealousy, and prejudice upon either account, when you set about this work.* As self-love and self-flattery bribeth and setteth carnal reason to plead for the interest of Unbelievers in God ; so when once faith is wrought, sinfull jealousy doth edge and sharpen the wit of carnal reason, to argue and rangle against the work of Faith ; and all such Objections as carnal reason doth finde out against it, are pleasing to this corrupt principle ; when you try your selves, you will but deceive your selves, if you do not cast out these two cursed corrupt Principles out of your souls : if your hearts be prepossessed with either, your judgments will be blinded, and become partial in passing sentence upon your estate. *Take heed of trying your selves by false marks of faith in God, of weighing with false weights.* Hereby you may miscarry both on the *right* hand, and on the *left* : on the *right* hand, if you try your selves by marks of perfect faith in God ; on the *left* hand, if you try your selves by such things as are not indeed Scripture-marks, of true faith in God ; for as God is the *Principium essendi*, the beginning or cause of the being of any grace ; so Gods Word is the *Principium cognoscendi*, the Principle by which we know what is true grace. I cannot

Psal. 4. 4.

T. Goodwin's
child of light,
cyc. page 26,
27, 28.

Hickman, &c.
page 127, 128,
129.

Burges's Refi-
nings : part I
page 57, 58.

Ob. Sedgw. of
Faith: chap.
13. (c. 1.)

Canr 4. 4, 5,
6, 7.

Burger, &c.
page 56, 57.

2 Pet: 1: 9:
Mat: 25: 29:

but mind you of three Rules of Direction, which, a worthy now with God, hath left you in this case. (1) *There are some things without which faith cannot be in the heart, and yet they do not necessarily and infallibly conclude that a Man hath faith.* Conclude not for your selves by finding the antecedents of Faith. (2) *There are some things which faith only doth produce, yet because it doth not produce them always, a Man must not therefore negatively conclude from the absence of them, the absence of faith.* (3) *There are some things, which faith only doth produce, not as essential properties, but as magnificent Testimonies.* Conclude not against your selves for the want of such effects of faith. Be sure that you do not any longer try your selves by uncertain qualifications, that belong not to every Believer, at all times, and none but believers; but try your selves by sure infallible marks by the essential properties and effects of Faith in God. *Set not about this work without hearty cries to God for his Spirit to irradiate the grace you are searching after, and by witnessing with your spirit to put you out of doubt.* It is a vain thing for you to go about this work, much more to think to go through with it by any strength of your own. And be sure that you take heed of provoking God to withdraw from you in this work. *Do not refuse the Light of Assurance when offered.* Hereupon Christ withdrew from the Spouse; but put your selves in a disposed and prepared way to receive the evidencing Light of the Spirit, who will not assure you whether you will, or no. *Do not make use of Signs in a prejudicial way to those direct and immediate Acts of Faith, whereby you close with God.* While you are poring and digging into your own heart to finde faith there, forget not to exercise applicative Acts of Faith. When ever you would go down into your own hearts, and take a view of your own graces, first close with God himself in Christ, and afterwards begin afresh upon the encouragement you have from the sight of grace within you, to act Faith upon God with a redoubled strength. *He that lacketh these things, i. e. that doth not use them, so not to use Talents, is not to have them, is blinde and soon forgetteth all the grace he hath.* If God do not appear presently do not murmur and repine against him. While Job thought that God wronged him; God ceased not to scare him with dreams, and terrify him with visions; but when he justified God, God appeared for him. But for a more full handling of the miscarriages about self-examination,

nation, which you should mourn for, and take heed of, I shall refer you to the twentieth chapter of the Gospel-glass.

4. *Resting in an imaginary Assurance.* Presumption is mainly the work of a strong fancy. What the rich Believer hath by propriety and in possession, the same hath the presumptuous Professor in a dreaming fancy and imagination. He pretends to be as knowing, as believing, as confident, as the true Believer; he never doubted of his interest in God, none more jocund and merry then he is thereupon. Hath not this been your sin? And is not God therefore conspending with you? Because we have built our house upon the Sands, is not God razing all our sandy Foundations? Because we have been careless of trying our selves, is not God trying us as silver is tried? May not we even say, *God and upright is the Lord, that will reach sinners his way*: that by the Thunder-claps of his righteous Judgments is resolved to awaken us out of those foolish dreams, in which if we should die, we were undone for ever? O that we may be dreamers no longer! O, take heed of presuming once more that God is your God, either because he made you: so he did the Devils. Gods making you, puts you in to the relation of creatures unto God, and God of a Creator unto you, but not of a chief-good and Supreme Lord. He is your Creator, whether you will, or no, but so he is not your God. Or because you prosper in every thing, and are not in trouble and distress as other men. The more you have of a portion in this life, the more cause you have to fear that God is not your portion. Or because Christ hath died for you to purchase an interest in God: So he hath, if you will consent to have him for your chief good and Sovereign Lord, or then wise not. O! how great will your confusion be, when your Gold shall be found Brass, your Wine to be Water, your Graces to be Corruptions; And you your selves appear no better then the mad Athenian, who thought all the Ships on the Sea were his. Take heed of such a confidence of an interest in God, as hath ignorance and self-love for its progreant causes: as is grounded on a meer natural light, or some false reasonings: as is wrought, without any serious & deep humiliation for being without God preceding it, and easily without any opposition: as leaves the soul idle in the Work of God, without love to, and encouragement in God: as is warranted with an holy fear, and humility: and as is not destroyed by sin, but crosses. Such a confidence is a presumptuous confidence, and not assurance. Even hypocrites may have some experimental knowledge, and yet not assurance of Faith: they may know that they are enlightened, and have other common gifts of the Holy-Ghost: that sin is imbittered to their souls: that they do assent to scripture Truths: that they have some desires after God and Christ: that they do at sometimes and in some things trust in God: and yet they want saving Faith, and therefore cannot know they have it. O take heed of this vitally fingering the Kings Coin without a Warrant: Christ told the Jews, that they were of their father, the Devil, though of his Father they said, *he is our God*: they made their boasts and brags, that God was their God; but God and Christ disowned them.

Chap. VI. The mis-carriages opposite to confession, the external Act of Faith in God.

1. *Resting upon positive confession without a Call from Heaven.* Hath confession without this been the sin of Jems? and have not all Professors sinned out a call, for

Against an imaginary assurance

Psal. 66. 10.

Psal. 25. 8.

Psal. 17. 14.

Burges Refin-

ing, part. 1.

Serm. 6.

Serm. 30.

and 118.

Sermon 3.

John 8. 54.

Against positive

for it? The Acute Author of *Christ Confessed* (who (as the Publisher observes) hath cut by a thread in clearly and judiciously determining the present grand Cases of the times) gives a three-fold Answer to this Question, *At what times are we privileged from* (and by consequence not called unto) *Christ confessed* positive confession of Christ? (1.) When the engagements for self-safety are not preponderated by, or in an equal poize with, those for our Saviours glory. (2.) When the interest both of the confession, and Confessor will be visibly prejudiced. (3.) When the ends of confessing Christ cannot manifestly be promoted by it, or attained by us; But the glory of God will be visibly rather hindered: the Gospel hurted: and the good of souls hazarded. O! see that for the future you do not unnecessarily pull sufferings upon your selves for your confession of your Faith. There is (as an eminent Confessor well observes) a suffering for our fault: there is a suffering for our Righteousness without our fault: and there is a suffering for our Righteousness through our fault. Run not your selves upon trouble when you need not, by unwary and imprudent managing and ordering your selves in the duties that confession of Faith engageth you to. Be clear especially in those things, which may be easily: labour to see the Pillar of Fire and the Cloud going before you. Take heed of giving any just occasion to others to persecute you, not onely because the event of so great a temptation is uncertain, but also lest you be a cause that others by shedding your blood become greater sinners then otherwise they would be.

Christ confessed
p. 65, 66.

Allens Vind. of
Godl. p. 379.

Against unready-
ness to confess
openly, when
called thereto.

1 Pet. 3. 14, 15.

C. C. p. 64.

Acts 21. 13:

Against delay-
ing actually to
confess, when
called thereto.

2. Unpreparedness openly to acknowledge faith in God, when ever he calls thereunto. What the Apostle saith concerning Hope, is true concerning Faith. Be ready alwayes to give a reason both of the faith that is before you, and of the faith that is within you: of the grace, as well as of the object of faith: your own acquaintance with God, believing of God, consenting to have him for your God, and relying upon him. Though you are not bound (saith the great Casuist) to render an account alwayes, yet you are bound alwayes to be ready, at least with an habitual readiness: though the outward action be not required at all times, yet the inward habitude is. But alas! have not you been strangers to an habitual inclination and disposition to this duty? Have not you been without those principles of self-denial and love to God, that Spirit of faith, patience, and prayer, that make souls ready for such work? O that this may be your sin no longer! Is not this one reason of the present Dispensations of Providence towards you, to stir you up by the Rod, that would not be stirred up by the Word to get to be ready, not only to be bound, but to die for Christ at Jerusalem! The Apostle doth not say, I will be bound, or I will die, but I am ready to be bound and to die. All backwardness is sliding back, when our Saviour saith unto us, Take up thy Cross and follow me.

3. Refusing, or delaying, actually to make an open acknowledgment of Faith in God, wh in thereby God will be most magnified, the Gospel best maintained, and the good of souls best ministered to. Hath not this been the sin of some of you? Have not you actually declined that confession, which you have been called to make? Have not you deferred your testimony to another time? and have not you hereby driven God away from you? sure I am this cost many of the Martyrs, especially in the Marian-Persecution, very dear. They did not make open acknowledgment of their Faith in God, when God called them

them thereunto : and what was the Issue? God in respect of comfort left them, and they were under worse torments, then their Persecutors could have inflicted on them. When *Jonah* had a Commission sealed him to go to *Nineveh* with a Message from God, he withdrew himself, and went another way ; but God in the midst of his security cast him into the Whales belly ; and when he was there, God withdrew from him, as if he meant never to own him more ; inasmuch, that he saith, *I am cast out of thy presence*. O that herein you would *sin no more* ! when ever God calls you thereto, do not defer to exhibit an open oral confession of your Faith in God, no, not a moment longer ; when God calls you thereto, do not defer to exhibit an open real confession of your Faith in God in an active way, openly living up unto your Faith in God ; or in a passive way, either by staying to suffer, or by suffering in flying, as the forementioned ends will best be promoted. O ! do not your Consciences tell you, that if you had been more publick in your real confessions in an active way, you had suffered less, not only from God, but from men. Take heed of suffering any more upon this account.

Jona. 2. 4.

See Christ
confessed,
qu. 7. prop. 7.
p. 69. &c.

4. *Dissembling in confession*. There is a time (saith our *Casuiſt*) for the suspension of our confession ; but there is no time for simulation (properly so called) in our confession. We may, yea must deal prudently, but not deceitfully. Hath not this been your sin? Hath not your conversation been in fleshly wisdom, and not in godly simplicity and sincerity? Have not you at least, at sometimes gone about to cast a veil of deceit before the eyes of men? No wonder that such deceitful ones are under tribute : no wonder that such treacherous dealings are dealt treacherously with. Dissemble I beseech you no more, either in your oral or in your real confessions.

Against dissem-
bling in confes-
sion.
C. C. p. 43.

Prov. 12. 24.
Iſa. 33. 1.

5. *Denying Faith in God*. Hath not this been your sin? and hath not God therefore denied you in this world? O! take heed of denying your Faith in God once more, lest Jesus Christ deny you in Heaven. O! Do not once more deny your Faith in God, either inwardly, or outwardly, either by word, or work, whether explicitly, or implicitly. Even concealed & smothered (much more denied) truths will one time or other set the Conscience in a flame. When *Jeremiah* said, *I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name* : What followeth? Then his word was in my breast as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, Let him not spare (saith *Job*) for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One : *q. d.* If I had hid his word from men, God might justly hide his mercies from me ; or if I had concealed his words from others, God might now justly reveal his wrath against me.

Against denying
Faith in God.

Mat. 10. 33.

Jer. 20. 9.

V. Caril on
Job 6. 10.

6. *Making shipwreck of Faith*. Hath not this also been your sin? Have not you renounced the confession which you once made? And hath not God departed from you, not only for your departures from your faith in him, but for your departures from your profession thereof? O! remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your first works. What saith the Apostle? Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wadding, and what ever others do, let us, among whom, upon whom, in whom such mighty things have been done by God, hold fast our Faith : have we a mind to be without God again? had we rather return to be Sarans, then continue to be the Lords? yea the profession of our faith : faith without profession, will do no more for us, then profession without faith : and that without wavering : this is both a man-like and a Christian act.

Against making
shipwreck of
Faith.

1 Tim. 1. 19.

Rev. 2. 5.

Heb. 10. 23.

Venning in the
Farewel Ser-
mons.

Against Hypo-
critical confes-
sion.

Rom 10. 9, 10.

G.C. p. 19, 20.

21, 22.

7. Resting in a general and common, without a special and saving confession of Faith in God. O! take heed of confessing faith in God, when you have not faith in God. Confession is not an immediate duty: first we must get faith in God; and then make confession thereof. See that there be a copy within of what you confess without. Take heed of confessing your faith in God without love to, and delight in God, at your Supreme Lord, as well as your chief good. (2.) Take heed of confessing your faith in God from strength of Arguments, or secular attractions, and not from inward principles. (3.) Take heed of confessing your faith in God without exerting any grace of the Spirit therein. (4.) Take heed of confessing your faith in God without aiming mainly at the glory of God.

I have been the briefer in this Chapter, because the main cases about confession are with admirable exactness and judgment determined, and all our duties relating to confession most pathetically press upon us in that accurate Treatise, called *Christ Confessed*, which therefore I hope hath not past your hands, and thereto I shall refer you.

I shall conclude it with the Observation of the worthy Author of the Preface, before an eminent Confessors Epistles, "That the reason why former Confessors found so much of God in their sufferings, that their very enjoyments seem but dreams to many; and the present Confessors find so little of God in theirs) is (not to speak any thing of the absolute Sovereignty of God, who may do with his own what he will, and dispense as he pleaseth, both as to measure and time) because there was such a difference in their confessions of their Faith in God. God met them, as men whose hearts were lifted up in the ways of the Lord, as men who rejoiced and wrought righteousness, and could neither be flattered, nor frowned out of their fidelity and freedom: And he hides himself from us, as if he were ashamed of such Witnesses, whose testimony is so unworthy of such a master, and so far short of what it ought to be, as if indeed we were ashamed of him, and his truth, and thought the torn and the lame a sufficient sacrifice for him. — Our suffering (if it deserve that Name) is with less edification and advantage to the Church, and less comfort to our own souls; because, if our testimony be weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, it will be found light; and to want many pounds, not only of what it ought to have, but what theirs had, whose work was found perfect before God. If therefore we be really desirous to be dealt with as they were, (and what is so desirable, next to Heaven, and the coming of the Kingdom of the Son of God upon the Earth?) Let us be men of the like faithfulness and zeal with them: then is it that we may hope to have sweet and balcyon dayes in his service; such as will make us the envy of our enemies, a comfort to our Friends, and an ornament to our profession: hereby shall a good report be brought upon the ways of God, and we shall be living witnesses that godliness with all disadvantages, and when accompanied with the fiery tryal, is great gain, and bath its hundred fold in this life, even with persecution.

